

Federal minister says no to Alpine National Park grazing



Credit: Philip Ingamells, Victorian National Parks Association

Federal environment minister Tony Burke has rejected a proposal by the Victorian Government to reintroduce cattle to the state's National Heritage-listed Alpine National Park.

Mr Burke has accepted his department's advice that cattle reintroduction would have 'a clearly unacceptable impact' on the national heritage values of the park.

In December 2010, Victoria's Department of Sustainability and Environment, proposed a research trial involving the reintroduction of up to 400 cattle to graze in Alpine National Park for up to 5 months a year for 5 years.

Nine out of the 10 sites selected for the trial are partly or entirely located within the area of the Park included on the national heritage list in 2008.

'The assessment has shown there is irrefutable evidence that cattle grazing would damage the sensitive natural environment, disturb the remote and wild character of the area, detract from aesthetic values, and erode its heritage values,' said Mr Burke.

Matt Ruchel, Executive Director of the Victorian National Parks Association (VPNA), said the VPNA applauded the federal minister's decision.

'Our magnificent Alpine National Park is a park not a paddock. The cattle grazing trial has been extensively criticised over the last 12 months by scientists and the community as deeply flawed and should now be formally abandoned by the Ballieu Government,' he said.

However, Mr Ruchel added that the cattle grazing trial proposal highlighted flaws in national environmental laws concerning national parks.

‘There needs to be clearer national laws in place to ensure all national parks are protected for all Australians, and fulfil our international conservation commitments.

‘The VNPA calls on the Federal Government to follow through on a plan to require proposals such as cattle grazing, mining and land clearing in national parks to be referred to the federal government for assessment under the national *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).’

Source: Ministerial press release/VNPA

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