

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Thursday, 11 September 2025

BEST OF THE BUSH OPEN FOR ALL VICTORIANS

The Allan Labor Government is protecting what Victorians love most about the bush – attracting more visitors to our regions, creating local jobs and educational opportunities and boosting the regional economy.

Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos today introduced the *Parks and Public Land Bill* into the Victorian Parliament – creating over 65,000 hectares of national park in Victoria's Central West.

The new legislation will deliver the Mount Buangor, Pyrenees and Wombat-Lerderderg national parks, the Cobaw and Hepburn conservation parks and expand the Bendigo Regional Park.

Mirboo North Immediate Protection Area will be permanently protected as a new Conservation Park, allowing Victorians to explore, relax and play in nature while ensuring the park is maintained for future generations to enjoy.

These new parks were a recommendation from the 2021 response to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Central West Investigation Final Report.

We're making sure these parks will continue to be accessible with Victorians able to use these areas to get into nature and do the things they love including bushwalking, camping, horse riding, four-wheel driving, dog walking, fishing, seasonal deer hunting and more.

The parks will protect Victoria's iconic native flora like Mount Cole Grevilliea, Pyrenees Gum and rare and threatened species like the Powerful Owl, Barking Owl, Swift Parrot and Southern Greater Glider.

The forest home of our state's bird emblem, the critically endangered helmeted honeyeater, the Yellingbo Landscape Conservation Area in the Yarra Valley will undergo a formal name change to Liwik Barring Conservation Area – "Liwik Barring" means "Ancestors Trail" in the Woi Wurrung language of the Wurundjeri People.

Deer hunters will also have the opportunity to hunt for deer in areas of the national parks, helping to control pests that damage the precious ecosystems and take part in an important recreational activity.

The creation of these parks are just some of many ways we're protecting and enhancing Victoria's natural assets, so they remain healthy and resilient for the future and as a treasured resource for outdoor recreation.

After the establishment of the three new national parks the Government will prioritise maintaining existing national parks and public land for all Victorians to visit and enjoy and will not be creating any new national parks.

For more information visit forestsandreserves.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos

"We're protecting what Victorians love most about our great outdoors, so that they can continue to experience and enjoy nature and attract more visitors to the regions."

"The new parks provide safe homes for our famous wildlife and boost local regional economies by keeping Victoria at the top of every visitor's bucket list."

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