



Department of Environment  
Land, Water & Planning

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Mr Bernard Slattery

Ref: MIN006297



Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests (Mount Alexander Region) Inc.  
PO Box 322  
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Dear Mr Slattery

**MAINTENANCE OF ROADS, TRACKS AND ROADSIDE VERGES INCLUDING FRYERS RIDGE ROAD**

Thank you for your letter of 10 August 2015 to the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water about maintenance of roads, tracks and roadside verges in State forests and conservation reserves including Fryers Ridge Road. As this matter is in my area of responsibility, the minister has asked that I respond on her behalf.

I understand the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Parks Victoria staff met with you on site and also at a Fire Operations Plan community engagement forum in Bendigo to discuss your concerns.

DELWP is responsible for an extensive forest road network of about 45,000 km which is essential for land and fire management. DELWP accepts that roads can impact the environment by enabling public access to forests resulting in inappropriate forest use (e.g. dumping rubbish), increased dust, changed light and moisture regimes, erosion and sediment impacts on waterways, vegetation removal, and feral animal and weed ingress.

DELWP undertakes a range of actions to reduce these impacts such as road design, maintenance and rehabilitation. However many of these impacts remain an intrinsic part of the compromise required for forest access, public safety and bushfire management.

I have addressed your four questions below:

**(1) Roadside scalping**

DELWP conducts risk assessment inspections of Fryers Ridge Road twice a year to ensure it meets its statutory obligations under the *Road Management Act 2004*. Results from the last inspection in May 2015 found works were needed to maintain minimum sight distances along parts of the road. The works to clear the road verges were undertaken in June 2015 and were within the footprint of similar works that were previously conducted.

Roadside scalping is sometimes used where the verge needs heavy vegetation and debris removed and the ground profile flattened to allow future maintenance to be carried out by slashing; to widen the mineral earth part of the road as part of planned burn preparation to help ensure a safe and contained planned burn; and if resource limitations have prevented an annual slashing program to be maintained causing an accumulation of heavy growth on the roadside.

**(2) DELWP expenditure on forest management and conservation reserve management 2005-2006 and 2014-2015.**

Estimating and comparing DELWP's expenditure on forest management and conservation reserve management in 2005-2006 with 2014-2015 is very difficult as the way costs are grouped and defined has changed significantly over this period. Figures for 2014-2015 are yet to be released but in 2013-2014, DELWP spent \$199.2 million on managing forests and parks and \$120.6 million on managing public land to improve the stewardship of our natural, built and historic assets.

**(3) Native vegetation clearance regulations**

The rules governing native vegetation removal and the requirement for a planning permit are set out in the planning system and apply to DELWP. As a land manager, DELWP must comply with these regulations. Like other individuals and organisations, DELWP may be able to obtain exemptions in particular circumstances.

**(4) Monitoring the effects of roadside clearing**

Although there is not a specific program to monitor the effects of roadside clearing, DELWP monitors and records the locations, status and treatment of feral animal and declared noxious weeds on its Integrated Pest Management System. A large proportion of the weeds recorded on public land are found on sections of roadsides and private land boundaries.

If you would like more information about this matter, please call Anjali Pal, Senior Policy Officer on (03) 9412 4142 or email [anjali.pal@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:anjali.pal@delwp.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Sebastian Chapman**

Acting Executive Director Land Management Policy

23 SEP 2015