

1 March 2006

Committee Secretary
Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
Reference Committee
Department of the Senate
via email to ecita.sen@ahp.gov.au

Dear Sir / Madam

INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL PARKS, CONSERVATION RESERVES & MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to provide comment upon the above inquiry and how the association is effected by the funding and resources available to Australia's national parks and other conservation reserves.

The Construction Material Processors Association (CMPA) is an industry body established to:

1. Conduct its affairs with honesty and integrity;
2. Demonstrate its commitment to the:
 - Viability of the industry
 - Protection of the environment
 - Community in which it exists;
3. Vigorously pursue with the government and others issues of widespread concern to members;
4. Demonstrate leadership and a sense of direction for the industry;
5. Act as a resource and provide support to members through the delivery of cost savings and assistance in complying with legal obligations;
6. Foster unity and cooperation between members and others;
7. Promote continuous improvement through education, training, and other activities

The CMPA represents a broad spectrum of those involved in construction material processing businesses engaged in extraction processing or otherwise working in hard rock, gravel, sand, masonry, clay, lime, soil, gypsum or recycling, industry consultants, industry suppliers and any industry worker.

Following are the associations comments made as sometime users of such areas.

Assessment for Stone Resources

The CMPA feels that it is essential that during the creation of any national park or other conservation reserve that the potential income from that area be thoroughly assessed. Such an oversight could be sterilising quarry materials available to future generations and preventing the nation from collecting income from that area through royalties paid per tonne extracted and rent payments of the use of the area paid to the Crown where applicable. These monies may have been used in the betterment of the area.

Furthermore, it is essential that the existing income to the Crown for an area being accurately established for nomination as a national park or conservation reserve and consideration given to the cost of sourcing materials from sources at a greater distance in terms of cost, environmental effect, and impact on community infrastructure such as roads.

Buffer Zones and National Parks

It is essential that in the creation of a National Park that buffer zone requirements are always considered. This concept was noted in the report of the Box-Ironbark Implementation Panel chaired by the Hon. John Button¹. With the implied special land use of the proposed expansion of conservation areas, difficulties pertaining to the opening of new extractive industry operations on freehold land abutting these areas are inevitable.

Buffer distances from freehold land abutting the proposed National Parks need to be identified within any review for change. As it is understood, "National Parks by definition would be a sensitive area" and would therefore require Clause 17.09 Extractive Industry of the State Planning Framework of all Planning Schemes in Victoria to be addressed. There are also Particular Provisions relating to Extractive Industry (Clause 52.09) and uses with Adverse Amenity Potential (Clause 52.10) in Planning Schemes across Victoria.

This issue does not pertain to the extractive industry alone and could sterilise further land from future developments due to the setbacks, as there is no formal planning direction similar to a Ministerial Direction from national parks. This issue needs to be considered for and appropriately addressed.

This issue also needs to be established from the point of view of existing operations within or abutting national parks and other conservation reserves and their future possibilities of expansion.

The CMPA and its members recognise that there is a time and a place for areas of Crown land to be protected as national parks or other conservation areas, however stress the need to more appropriately consider the value of extractive industries on Crown land and in some instances, within national parks and other conservation areas. For instance:

- The creation and maintaining of emergency tracks without the need to cart material for vast differences
- The value to the Crown of the extractive industries in terms of royalties and lease agreements
- The value to isolated communities of nearby extractive resources
- The small ecological footprint and non-permanent nature of the extractive industries
- The geologically driven nature of the extractive industries
- Reducing the distance between extractive industry sites reducing cartage requirements, and in turn reducing environmental impact, impact upon community infrastructure (i.e. roads), and reducing the cost impact upon consumers

If you would like to discuss these comments further, please do not hesitate in contacting me (enquiries@cmpavic.asn.au or 03 5781 0655)

Yours sincerely

Ron Kerr
Honorary CEO

¹ Box-Ironbark Implementation Panel. The box-ironbark implementation panel report. 18/1/2002. The Hon Button, Ms A Teese, Dr I MacBean