

Cattlemen warn of setting a dangerous precedent

- **“to say this is irresponsible is putting it lightly”**

The Mountain Cattlemen’s Association of Victoria (MCAV) is calling on environmental groups to consider the long-term ramifications of their actions after it came to light that a Federal Court case against planned burns was underway.

The Save our Strathbogie Forest Group has lodged documents with the Federal Court, asking that all planned burns in the area require federal approval before being allowed to ignite this Spring.

President of the MCAV, Cass McCormack, said it was yet again proof that continued scientific, academic and anecdotal evidence was being ignored.

“How many times do we need to say it; if we don’t manage the bushfire fuel loads now we will find ourselves battling more megafires and fewer bushfires,” she said.

“A megafire will destroy the entire ecosystem and everything living in it.”

Public land management has long been a cornerstone of the MCAV, who advocate for alternative methods of bushfire fuel reduction, including increased planned burns and high-country grazing.

“I grew up in the Strathbogie Forest and appreciate the groups heart is in the right place, but like so many other environmentalists they are not looking at the big picture,” Ms. McCormack said.

“This landscape has been managed by humans and fire for thousands of years – it is only in the last century that we have decided to go against traditional methods previously used.

“By choosing to ignore the past we are seriously endangering the future – I don’t know many who would like to see a repeat of the Black Summer bushfires, but we certainly have short memories.

“Here we are, just a few years on, and we have groups again campaigning to stop planned burns – to say it is irresponsible is putting it lightly.”

Ms McCormack is calling on groups such as the Save our Strathbogie Forest Group to widen their reading to include books by scientists and experts such as Bill Gammage, Vic Jurskis, Roger Underwood and Victor Steffensen.

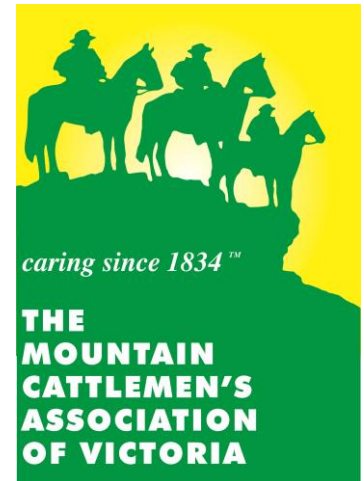
“I know that fire scientists Kevin Tolhurst and industry expert Garry Squires have both come out and condemned this madness, and the Mountain Cattlemen’s Association would like to add their voice as well.

“This could set a very dangerous precedent for all planned burns in the State should the court case be successful.”

The legal challenge is based on a review of the Australian Government law, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

The Victorian Government maintains its planned burning practices in the Strathbogie Forest are legal.

For more information on the Mountain Cattlemen’s Association of Victoria, visit www.mcav.com.au.



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