

The Hon. Shelley Hancock, MP
1/57 Plunkett Street
NOWRA NSW 2541

16th July 2019

By email to: southcoast@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Minister Hancock,

We represent local branches of our respective non-governmental organisations. We are contacting you as the representative of ourselves and our local membership in the NSW Parliament to express our horror at the Deputy Premier's commitment to reintroduce a Bill to degazette the Murray Valley National Park (MVNP).

We ask you to write as soon as practicable to the Minister for the Environment, Matt Kean, and the Minister for Planning and cluster leader, Rob Stokes, to pass on our concerns. We also seek your assurance that you will not support degazettal of this special area and that you will be a strong advocate against Mr Barilaro's proposal in Cabinet.

The precedent that degazettal of such a significant protected area would set is huge. Almost all forested national parks were, at one point, subject to logging, and shifts away from extraction to conservation are never easy. They are however necessary if we are to avoid more extinctions and environmental degradation.

Mr Barilaro's proposal raises the spectre of industry interest groups attempting to unpick protections for protected areas elsewhere. Murramarang National Park is a good example: it was highly prized by the logging industry due to the large trees of desirable species (spotted gum). Yet these features also make it incredibly valuable for conservation. It is now highly visited and is one of the sites for a new Great Walk and a huge conservation success.

After the election the Premier spoke about building an environmental legacy. This is urgently required as the most recent NSW State of Environment Report shows more and more species are becoming threatened and land continues to be degraded¹. Internationally, we're in the midst of a global crisis in the natural world². In light of this, we should be increasing protections for our globally significant ecosystems and wildlife, not removing them.

We enclose a briefing note that details several important considerations including conservation, economic contribution of the park, Aboriginal cultural and management interests and logging self-interest.

We look forward to your prompt response, and we are happy to meet you to discuss this issue at your convenience.

Brigitte Nairn,
Convenor, NPA Milton Branch

Rob / Oisín
BirdLife Shoalhaven

¹<https://www.soe.epa.nsw.gov.au/>

²https://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/ipbes_7_10_add-1-advance_0.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=35245