PRESS RELEASE. From the Yarra Waterways Group.

Yarra Waterways Chairman Rick Houlihan acknowledged that the Minister's decision was a good compromise, and whilst it was not the preferred option of the Group, which was to have the Upper Yarra section of the proposed National Park removed, the Ministers decision to limit the width of revegetation of the crown river reserves to 10 metres was a positive improvement in addressing the communities concerns about the increased bushfire risk of the original proposal recommended by the Yellingbo VEAC investigation.

The detailed Fire Management Plan by Fire Experts Kevin Tolhurst and Justin Leonard will still need to address the bushfire risk for the entire Yellingbo Investigation Area.

The Minister has reinforced the Victorian Governments support for the 2009 Royal Commission's recommendation that "the protection of human life" must always be the number one priority of Government.

Our recent petition to the State Government which over 1100 people signed in one week in Yarra Junction illustrated our communities concerns about the increased fire threat posed by the implementation of the Yellingbo investigation's recommendations to revegetate the entire crown reserve.[many of which are over 100 metres wide.]

The Minister has also responded to our groups criticism of the make up of the Yellingbo coordination committee by appointing a representative of the CFA to the committee together with the new Yarra Ranges Community representative Peter Cooper , a well known and respected farmer from Gilderoy.

Our Group will continue to work with Kelly Crosthwaite the Director of the Port Phillip region of DELWP in the production of a 'riparian grazing licence' which will provide for limited grazing of the crown reserves for fire protection whilst protecting the environmental importance of the river reserves. Weed and feral pest issues are still significant issues for our group to pursue in the future with the department.

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