

POLICY BRIEFING

Our Backyard

Keeping Victoria's outdoors open, free, and ours.

Libertarian

Victoria is one of the best places on earth to get outside. Millions of us do it every year, fishing, camping, hiking, hunting, four-wheel driving, mountain biking, climbing, or just taking the kids somewhere green on the weekend.
But bit by bit, that freedom is being fenced off. Climbing banned at the Grampians and Mount Arapiles. New national parks locking up land. Rules piling on rules. Somewhere along the way, the government stopped trusting ordinary people to enjoy their own state responsibly.
We think that's backwards. The outdoors belongs to everyone, not to bureaucrats, not to whoever lobbies hardest. Here's what we'd do about it.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Open to all, closed to almost none. Public land is your land. Access should be the default. If something has to be restricted for real safety or genuine environmental reasons, fine, but the government has to show you the evidence and explain why. "Because we said so" doesn't cut it.

Trust the people who use it. The folks who actually love these places already look after them, for free. Climbers repair the crags. Duck hunters build and restore wetlands. Volunteer "friends" groups keep local parks clean. Thousands of Victorians give up their weekends for this. Back them, don't strangle them.

Mostly free - pay only where it makes sense. The vast majority of activities should cost you nothing. But when something is high-impact or needs constant upkeep, a small, honest fee to cover the cost is fair. (Scrapping camping fees, for instance, created shortages and left campgrounds worse off.)

Decisions made locally, with the people affected. The Mount Arapiles climbing bans are a case study in how not to do it: the government drew up a plan and consulted just one group, while the tens of thousands of climbers who actually use the place weren't even in the room. Locals and real stakeholders should have a seat at the table.

Back to basics on the environment. Clean air and clean water are what matter to families. Yet a huge share of resources now goes into climate strategy while the basics get less attention. We'd refocus on enforcing clear, simple pollution standards, the stuff that actually keeps your local river and air clean.

Cut the red tape. Environmental rules have become a maze, multiple permits, endless delays, forms that need a lawyer to read. We'd simplify and consolidate them so compliance is easy, without dropping the standards that count.
Show us the data. The government already collects mountains of information on pollution and environmental risk. Make it public and easy to access, so concerned locals can see what's really going on.

WHAT WE'D ACTUALLY DO

- No new national parks. More parks too often means more locked gates, higher costs for taxpayers, and no real environmental payoff. Farmers have warned for decades that neglected parks turn into breeding grounds for feral pests. Hunters and everyday users help keep those numbers down.
- One set of rules for everyone. No special access or privileges for any group. Genuinely significant sites, like historic burial ground, deserve protection. But vague, unverifiable claims that could cover almost anything shouldn't be able to shut the rest of us out. The outdoors is for every Victorian, equally.
- Stand up for hunting and fishing. These are activities Victorians have done for generations. Fishing is well run, sensible rules, clear reasons, and licence fees reinvested in fish stocks. Hunting, though, is buried in red tape. We oppose banning duck hunting and slashing seasons without solid science, and we oppose the lead-ammo phase-out, which lacks real evidence and would likely just wound more animals. Keep licences for safety; ditch the rest.



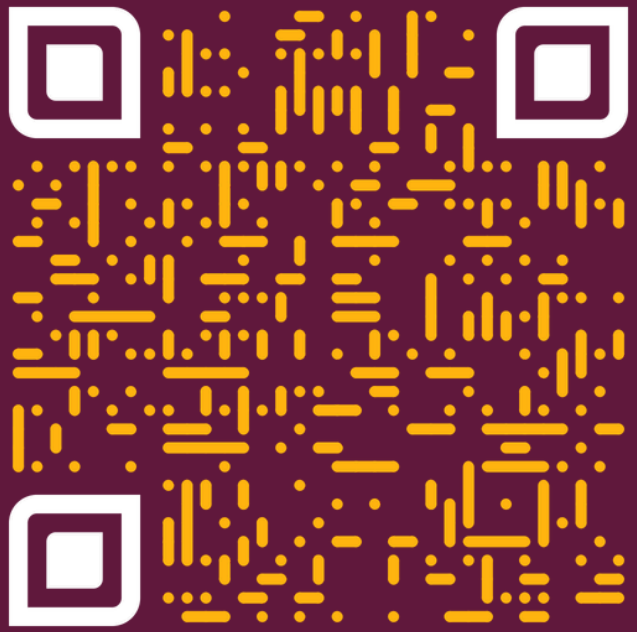
- Let people conserve on their own dime. When a Ballarat local spent his own money building a private wildlife sanctuary for rare native species, the department tried to shut him down, until a Libertarian MP stepped in. That's madness. We'd celebrate private conservation, not bury it in paperwork.

- Scrap licences for low-impact tourism. Right now a small guided-walk or wildlife-tour operator has to buy a special Parks Victoria licence and pay access fees for the privilege of running a harmless business. If it costs taxpayers nothing extra, the licence goes. They'll follow the same rules as any other business, no more, no less.

- Champion the volunteers. Every year tens of thousands of Victorians clean up beaches, restore habitat, and maintain our parks and rivers for nothing but the love of it. A Libertarian government would support, back and celebrate them.



https://vic.libertarians.org.au/policies



Our Policies

Libertarian