

Labor Government urged to keep alpine grazing trial going

- by: *ROB HARRIS*
- From: *The Weekly Times*



Trial finished: Mountain cattleman Charlie Lovick says the Victorian government should continue with a three-year trial into alpine grazing. *Source: News Corp Australia*

VICTORIA's new Labor Government is being urged to allow the completion of a three-year alpine grazing trial.

Nationals Senator Bridget McKenzie has called on new Premier Daniel Andrews not to shut down the trial, which began last year, for political reasons and instead await the results.

Victorian Environment Minister Lisa Neville yesterday outraged the Mountain Cattlemen's Association on ABC radio when she confirmed the trial would end.

"This is a policy that we introduced legislation on back in 2005-06," she said.

"The evidence that was presented to the Parliament and to the government of the day was that cattle grazing was doing significant environmental harm in our alpine national parks.

"We believe the science hasn't changed."

Senator McKenzie said the new government was "playing politics to appease the Greens" and "ignoring proper scientific processes".

"They demand we listen to science on climate change but it's not appropriate to do so for cattle grazing which has been approved on a trial basis under environment legislation that they support. Talk about double standards," she said

"The trial was approved by the Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt earlier this year to investigate bushfire fuel management using strategic grazing of cattle.

“It’s taking place on just 262 hectares of land within the boundaries of the former Wonnangatta Cattle Station and is subject to more than 30 strict conditions including environment, cultural and heritage assessments.”



Science not politics: Nationals Senator Bridget McKenzie says Premier Daniel Andrews is not respecting the scientific process by cancelling an alpine grazing trial in Victoria’s High Country.

Source: News Corp Australia

Senator McKenzie said there was no justification to abandon the trial and the government should wait for the results of the trial and adopt an “educated rather than blinkered view of the issue”.

“It is illogical and shortsighted to cut a scientific trial short on the basis of ideology. In fact, I strongly recommend the Victorian government commission overdue research in to the impact of wild deer and horses on the national park.”

President of the Mountain Cattlemen’s Association of Victoria Charlie Lovick said he had written to Ms Neville on the day she was appointed asking for the trial to continue.

“We asked her to not make a hasty decision because the trials are vastly different from normal Alpine grazing under rangeland conditions,” he said.

“To learn of her decision on radio was very disrespectful” he said.

He said the issue of alpine grazing was “totally political” and rational discussion had “gone out the window”.