

Act now to protect Barrm Birrm

To: Councillors and CEO of Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Barrm Birrm is 120 ha of bush in Riddells Creek. Sold off as 162 lots in the mid-1970s, against a sub-division put in place in the 1890s, building has never been permitted. Council's 2023 ecological assessment describes it as 'arguably the most intact flora and fauna area in the region'. It is a stronghold for four species of Victorian-listed threatened flora.

In August 2022, MRSC Council recognised '*the unique and special environmental and community values of Barrm Birrm*'. It resolved to advocate to the Victorian Government for the public purchase of the privately owned lots, and initiated planning for appropriate management of Barrm Birrm.

That work is proceeding (see staff report to Council, 27 September 2023). With locked gates on the public roads, 4WD activity has dropped. Riddells Creek Landcare is dealing with weeds and rubbish. The bush is recovering.

However, trail bike riders continue to enter at will. In the past, they have sought out old trails on the upper slopes. In the last two months, they have begun cutting new trails in the lower slopes, across properties owned by Council and private landholders. The damage is immediate. The surface of lichens, mosses and grasses is broken and erosion begins.

This activity presents a serious threat to the ecological values of Barrm Birrm, its peaceable use by walkers from across the region and beyond, and its future enjoyment by residents of Riddells Creek.

Riddells Creek Landcare calls on Council to take swift action:

1. Set up signage at the boundary that informs the public of the significance of the area and appropriate and inappropriate use.
2. Set up signage inside Barrm Birrm to educate people about its flora, fauna and history.
3. Strengthen barriers to entry at illegal access points created by 4WDs.
4. Bring to bear Council Local Laws restricting trail bike use, and liaise with local police on trespass of riders on Council and private properties.

The community of Riddell, and Council, must protect what it has come to appreciate and love.

Ross Colliver

President, Riddells Creek Landcare



RIDDELLS CREEK LANDCARE

