

## **Country Alliance calls for Victorian Liberal Party to state its position on VEAC**

The Country Alliance party has called for the Victorian Liberal Party to state its position on the Victorian Environment Advisory Committee's final River Red Gum Forests Investigation report.

'These recommendations are the latest example of a non-representative committee of urban academics pursuing an ideological agenda at the expense of people living in regional Victoria', said party spokesman, Russell Bate.

Mr Bate commended the National Party for their vocal opposition to the VEAC recommendations and the widespread hardship that it would create in the affected areas, however he pointed out that the National Party is the junior member of the Coalition and that the senior member, the Liberal Party, has remained ominously silent on the matter.

"Country Alliance believes that the people of Victoria, and especially those living in regional Victoria need to know what the Liberal Party's position is on this important report"

"The Liberals cannot be allowed have their cake and eat it too."

"They cannot remain silent on this issue in the hope of not offending inner suburban Melbournians on the one hand and letting people in regional Victoria assume that, like the National Party, they oppose these recommendations on the other"

Mr. Bate said it was time for the Liberals to come clean. "Either they support these recommendations or they do not; but they owe it to the electorate to make their position clear."

"While it could be that that they fully support the National's position, it is important that the community hear them say so. The last minute deals between the Liberal Party and the Greens in the 2006 state election would have left many country Victorians cautious about where the Liberal's loyalties would lie on these issues".

"The Liberal Party has a long history of representation of rural Victorians, don't fail us now" Mr Bate added.

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