

Address to OCC Meeting 4th October 2016 open Forum

Mount Canobolas is the major landmark of the Orange region. It can be first sighted from at least 50 kilometres away.

The mountain itself has 2 main parts. The Mt Canobolas State Conservation Area and the State Forests. These are surrounded by a completely changed agricultural and residential environment.

The Conservation Area is a significant remnant of vegetation that previously covered the local landscape. It is a high altitude remnant in relatively good order. It is 6km by 5km wide and occupies 1672 hectares.

These aren't my words but are taken from the current Plan Of Management.

The state forests are plantations of radiata pine. These provide poor wildlife habitat, but are suitable for mountain bike trails.

Our objection is that the proposed 70 kilometres of trail in the SCA would carve up and fragment the remaining vegetation. The park itself is not particularly large (6 by 5 km) and its steepness already provides barriers. Both plant and animal communities would be adversely affected.

Orange city and its Council are the custodians of Mount Canobolas. They have to consider the best use of this special place. If they were to proceed with these trails in the SCA (trails in the pine forests are another matter) the disturbed land is marked for the future. The council has to consider the long game, some things are a good decision straight away, some things even time cant turn into a good decision.

Or business circumstances can change. Will the present plantation forests be replanted with pine after they are harvested? Pine plantations are everywhere now due to more recent tax-driven investment schemes. How much softwood does Australia need?

Pine plantations because of their already changed environment are especially suitable for mountain bike trails.

The proposed trails are a "Rolls Royce" option. Their positioning and length are much greater than the existing BTM trails at Bathurst and Dubbo. There appears to be some sort of arms race with these local trails and other trails across NSW.

Other state parks have MBT but none of these have the quality remnant habitat of the Mt Canobolas SCA.

The OFNCS opposes the use of the Mt Canobolas SCA for a mountain bike trail centre. The plan of management should not be changed to accommodate this proposal.

John Austin President OFNCS 4 October 2016

