

Environment East Gippsland's
Forest Update



3rd June 2013

Good news

1. We're suing the government again!
2. Eden woodchippers post a \$2.6M loss
3. VicForests back in Court – appeal on Leadbeaters Possum
4. Greens candidate for Gippsland

Activism on the run ... things you can do to help right now -

1. Add your name to harangue state polities on logging law changes
2. World Env Day – Wednesday in Melbourne! Come along
3. Forests as electricity - cyber letter to power retailers.

Not so good news

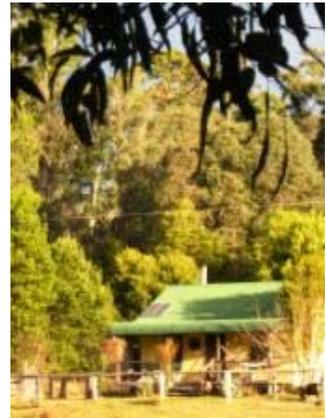
1. Tassie's Peace/Fleece Deal – are you confused?
2. Govt out-burns bushfires.
3. \$7M more to help destroy trees
4. 45 years of overkill logging – govt slow to respond

COUNTRY COTTAGE FOR RENT - East Gippsland

Solar powered – on organic farm. \$120 pw.

See <http://www.gumtree.com.au/s-property-for-rent/east-gippsland/cottage/k0c18364i3001132> **for more details.**

The Potoroo newsletter should be coming out before the end of the month. It has been a year since the last. Without our paper Potoroo we are unable to remind people of their membership renewals, which help pay the EEG bills (no wages).



Please consider a donation before the end of the tax-year if you can manage it.

<http://www.givenow.com.au/environmenteastgippsland>

GOOD NEWS

1. WE'RE SUING THE GOVERNMENT AGAIN !

(skip this if you read it in our last email update)

On the 21st May lawyers representing EEG lodged papers in the Supreme Court to start proceedings to sue the Department of Environment and Primary Industries for years of failure to protect Victoria's threatened wildlife.

We are alleging in Court that the State Government has violated the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act by not preparing protection plans called Action Statements. We are using **four representative threatened species: the Glossy Black Cockatoo, the Long-nosed Potoroo, the Eastern She-oak Skink and the Large Brown Tree Frog.**



These four represent the **other 370 listed species** that also have **no legal protection** despite them being extremely rare and on the **government's threatened list.**

There's is a big difference though, between being *listed* as threatened and actually being *protected*.

Law that says these species must be recovered and populations restored are violated daily.

We proved that the Victorian government logging agency had failed to survey for and protect endangered forest wildlife for decades, when we won the last Supreme Court case in 2010.

But we then learnt that VicForests can survey for and identify rare animals, but still destroy them, their homes and food. Although they're in deep trouble, the govt has not written up plans to protect all listed wildlife so there is in fact no legal plan to restore and recover their numbers.

We have amazing animals that exist nowhere else on earth, but laws to protect them are violated daily by the government.

The state government is applying the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act to instead guarantee their extinction of hundreds of rare plants and animals.

This case will cost us thousands of dollars and we are asking for any assistance you can offer.

Tax deductible donations for 2012/13 can be made to EEG via GiveNow:

<http://www.givenow.com.au/environmenteastgippsland2>

or send cheques to EEG, Locked Bag 3 ORBST 3888.

Please share this - or send to others who are also fighting to save their local wildlife. **This case could have wide ranging outcomes.**

2. Eden woodchippers post a \$2.6 million loss.

The driver of East Gippsland's forest destruction, Japanese owned SEFE, has recorded an after tax loss of \$2,644,516 for 2012. Exports for the year were 766,161 GMT, down from over a million tonnes several years ago. Their plan to turn 'waste' into power generating fuel has fallen over. How long can Nippon, the parent company keep hanging on. <http://www.woodchippingsux.net.au/SEFE%20Ann%20Rept%202012.pdf>

3. Leadbeaters Possum appeals court decision

In another court case, the esteemed Julian Burnside QC will represent MyEnvironment (and the Leadbeaters Possum) in the Supreme Court of appeal this month. The case will challenge the decision last year to allow the logging of Leadbeaters habitat despite strong grounds for its protection.



Get along and take a front row seat to witness one of Australia's best QC's test whether the law can in fact protect wildlife from extinction.

This history making event will be heard on the 24th of June 2013. Check out MyEnvironment's website for more info. www.myenvironment.net.au/

4. Green candidate for Gippsland

Hi, my name is Scott Campbell-Smith and I'm the Greens Candidate for the seat of Gippsland in the coming Federal election.

It's a daunting task and I desperately need all sorts of help to make a good show of it. The two key goals are:

- 1) To publicise environmental and social issues that are woefully neglected in the mainstream media
- 2) To significantly increase the Greens vote in the electorate (supporting also the Senate candidate Janet Rice);

If you're willing to assist or if you just want to know what the campaign is doing, please email me and I can update you as the we crank up the Gippsland campaign.

My email is: greengipps@gmail.com My Facebook page is:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gippsland-Greens/132819313569428?ref=hl>

If you're up for helping, please also let me know what you can do. We'll need people to write letters or call radio stations, help organise screenings of the anti-CSG movie 'Gippsland is Precious' and of course hand out HTV cards on election day.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Scott.

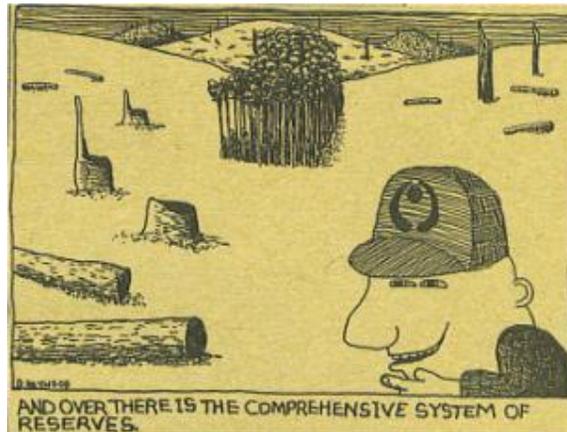


ACTIVISM ON THE RUN

Also see 'Greens candidate for Gippsland above' to offer your help.

1. Logging laws enter dark ages – click and flick a message.

You might remember the story about the planned changes to the state logging law, the misnamed *Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act* (E-Bulletin 5th May). This Bill will go back to the Lower House any week now, to be voted on.



The planned changes will effectively give VicForests almost total control of public land – to log as much as they want, when and where they want. There will be no oversight by the government and no time limit on licences. It would be effectively privatising public land!

Any week now we expect this Bill to come before parliament. Please **SEND A MESSAGE NOW to pollies** at the link below – and **especially to Geoff Shaw – who just might be persuaded to cross the floor – and tip the vote.** It is asking for a deferral of the Bill until the Victorian Auditor General has finished investigating VicForests. Sharing this on Facebook would also be a big help. Thanks.

<http://www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/defer-the-bill-that-would-lock-in-long-term-native-forest-logging>

2. World Environment Day is here again

Wednesday 5th June 2013

Every day, **8 city blocks** of Victoria's forests are logged, mostly for woodchips to turn into paper.

**Please meet at 12.45pm for action at 1pm.
Corner of Bourke and Elizabeth Streets, to link hands with like-minded people
around a 2ha city block. Please wear a green top if you can.**

This will be a representation of the slaughter of forests and the growing community outrage. Hundreds of people are needed to show this is a BIG political issue.

The Wilderness Society is holding this special event.

For more information and to RSVP contact Ben Campbell: ben.campbell@wilderness.org.au,
(03) 9038 0851

3. Forests as electricity

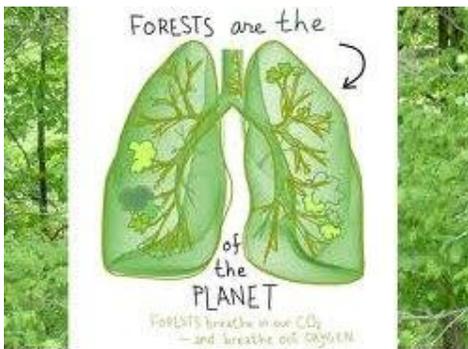
YOU can help – it's easy!

**Please click here. It takes 45 seconds
and will make a WORLD of difference for
little people like this...**

<https://nativeforests.good.do/dont-trash-forests-for-bioenergy/say-no-to-a-biomassacre/>

**It pings a message to 30 of Australia's
power retailers. Great value for your time!**

Please also send this petition to friends or post up on your Facebook page.



One very positive outcome of the two-day Residues to Revenue (or Forests to Furnaces) conference held in Melbourne in mid April, was the withdrawal of Virgin Airlines from presenting at the conference. Clearly they decided their new eco-friendly image would be damaged by associating with a band of forest burners. This conference was also attended outside by a crowd of people that let the passing traffic on the busy St Kilda street know what was going on inside. They received many toots of support.

NOT SO GOOD NEWS

1. Tasmania's Fleece ('peace') Deal

Three years ago Tasmania's woodchip industry collapsed. Logging companies made a public plea to environmental groups for a rescue deal. It was expected to be an exit agreement.

In December 2012 a very dubious deal was struck, but the Upper House got hold of it in April 2013, it was thoroughly corrupted. For whatever reason though, the environmental negotiators and four of the five Tassie Greens MPs signed off on it! This was staggering.

The final deal includes:

500,000 ha might be delivered into reserves IF:

- \$350 million is given to the Tasmanian Government, loggers and their towns.
- The three signatory green groups ensure no other environmental groups organise 'substantial' protests against logging and ensure,
- there are also no substantial campaigns against buyers of native forest logs or woodchips from Tasmania.
- These three groups (ACF, TWS and Environment Tasmania) must also *actively promote* the wood products to overseas customers (not just desist from campaigning against the products).
- Forestry Tasmania is awarded eco-certification (FSC).
- The Liberals don't get into government in 2014 and tear up the deal – as promised.

This is Blackmail – which is against the law and likely to be unconstitutional.

First off, 80,000 ha will be delivered up front into a reserve. At the same time the Federal Government gives Tasmania \$350 million right now. Meanwhile the remaining 420,000 ha of forest will be held hostage for a couple of years in case there are protests, market campaigns or Forestry Tasmania (FT) misses out on being eco-certified for obliterating what remains outside the planned reserve areas.

When FT doesn't get the green tick for its cable logging, clearfelling of pristine forests and habitats, then the hostage forests get it in the neck and the rate of logging will treble.

The fact that the environment groups can't promise, manipulate or facilitate eco-certification (independent auditors do that job), was not taken into account when the Upper House added this crazy proviso. This alone will mean the deal will fall over, as Tasmanian logging will never score genuine certification.



After this was signed on May 1st, Forestry Tasmania immediately and provocatively aimed their bulldozers at three areas of forest that supports the endangered Swift Parrot! (this has been given a three month reprieve).

So from a certain total collapse in 2010 to a resuscitated industry in 2013, with millions in handouts again, three major green groups engaged to help sell the spoils of forest destruction, silence all other Tasmanian green groups, agree to getting eco-certification for the appalling logging regime, and oh yes – caused rifts between environment groups.

What a corker of a deal!

This atrocious agreement is being suggested as a template for similar talks to be held on the mainland. But we would hope that after this disaster, mainland groups will steer clear of similar set-ups using the same 'negotiators'.

2. Govt out-burns bushfires

The bushfires of 2012-13 in Victoria covered around 150,000 ha. The government media has proudly announced they have burnt 250,000 ha of forest this Autumn!



So what does this mean?

Besides this being **one massive unscientific experiment** based on politicians trying to placate nervous electorates, rather than effective asset protection, it has also:

- Added around **18.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide** to the atmosphere. About 20 tonnes a hectare of stored carbon is estimated to be lost during burns (x 3.67 = CO² created). The same as Hazelwood's dirty coal power station pumps out every year!
 - Taken out healthy functioning **ground soils' duff and compost layers** which keeps the soil damp and cool – and fire resistant.
 - Burnt the **fungi** that are so important for 'digesting' leaves, twigs and even logs.
 - Taken out ground habitat for **micro-organisms that feed small birds, lizards and frogs** – the very basis of a forest's food chain.
 - Taken out large areas of cover for the **ground dwelling wildlife** exposing them to predation, exposure and starvation.
 - Ignorantly destroyed the habitat of many **rare and threatened plants and animals** as there are no surveys done before igniting large patches of forest.
 - Burnt out and destroyed thousands of **highly valuable hollow bearing trees**, critical for so much rare wildlife.
 - Exposed delicate soils to rain wash and **erosion**.
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3. \$7 Million more to help destroy trees

In the state budget, Premier Napthine has allocated \$7 million of our taxes to ensure no tree along a planned burn area can ever fall over of its own accord. They'll cut them all down first! This is on top of another \$34million to burn even more hectares next year.

This plan has seen 300 trees knocked over in the Dandenong Ranges National Park and 3,000 in the Otways National Park just for starters. Many of us have also seen beautiful big old habitat trees deliberately cut down or pushed over along roads and tracks in the last few of months. These are where DSE burns are to take place; the reason? Roadside trees just *might* fall onto a track or even a car.

Some regions are now more gung-ho with this new order than others. Valuable and scarce habitat trees with hollows will be felled to line roadsides and tracks with highly flammable material. This isn't considered in the nonsensical rush to take out more trees INCASE they fall over.

Loss of hollow bearing trees is listed under both the states FFG Act (but has no Action Statement!) and the Commonwealth EPBC Act as a threatening process. Habitat trees are at an absolute premium in our forests. Most have been clearfelled during the last 50 years, burnt out and fallen in planned burns or lost in bushfires.

If the government is genuinely fearful of trees, the less destructive and costly method would be to employ a fire management crew to rake-hoe around the base of those that might pose a risk, before lighting up the area. This would prevent them from being burnt out by their fires – as happens all the time with government planned burns.

If you come across this sort of vandalism, could you please take and send photos for an image gallery of the 'great Napthine eco-cide' regime. Send to eeg@eastgippsland.net.au

These snow gums near Hotham have stood solidly for hundreds of years. Peter Walsh and Denis Napthine have allocated \$7 million to push down thousands of trees *in case* they fall on tracks during government burns.



4. 45 years of overkill logging – extinction imminent.

Since 2003, various bushfires have burnt through huge areas of Mountain Ash. Salvage logging these burn victims saw clearfelling at many times the 'sustainable' rate. Only now does VicForests concede it might have overdone it and announces a tiny 25% cut - but in another 4 years! Experts believe this could be too late for the endangered Leadbeaters Possum.

The industry doesn't like too much sudden change we are told. In political language four years means *never*. So VicForests will keep clearfelling in the prime habitat for Victoria's endangered faunal emblem, the Leadbeaters Possum. About 1,000 animals are thought to still survive, but about 2,000 hectares of its habitat will continue to be clearfelled and burnt every year.

All enquiries and reviews since the 80s have shown the logging industry has clearfelled at obscenely voracious rates since it started in the early 70s.

Professor David Lindenmayer has studied the ash forests for decades and says the Possum is close to extinction. Waiting for 2017 for a small 25% reduction in cut could be too late.

OTHER NEWS – IN SUMMARY

Environment disappears into new mega department

The merging of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (Liberal minister Ryan Smith) and the Department of Primary Industries (Nationals minister Peter Walsh) is now called DEPI, the Dept of Environment and Primary Industries. The Ministers share the portfolio.

Ryan Smith seems to have gone missing though. Meanwhile Peter Walsh is opening the gate to the logging and mining industries, developers, tree clearers, shooters and prospectors. The government's policy and planned laws bare remarkable resemblance to these entities publicly stated demands.

Our contact email is - EEG@eastgippsland.net.au

Our website is - www.eastgippsland.net.au

Our Facebook page is – <https://www.facebook.com/EnvironmentEastGippsland> and please **'like'** us - This is where the most up to date news summaries can be found.

Cheers – Jill and the EEG team.