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# End of the EG woodchip is nigh

**The best piece of good news for decades is that the Japanese-owned Eden export woodchip mill has announced that they no longer want woodchips from East Gippsland after December!**

**This has sent VicForests and the industry into a tail spin.**

The announcement was intended to be buried under the budget. In mid May VicForests announced that the Eden based Japanese woodchip giant SEFE will stop buying East Gippy woodchips and whole logs at the end of this year. Clearly they were in shock and can't put a positive spin on this – except to say they at least now have 'certainty' – about the industry's uncertainty.

All industry players interviewed on ABC radio presented badly and the export woodchip company's announcement has clearly been a 'body blow' to them all. When asked if they will be taking any logs or sawmill waste from EG mills the mill manager Peter Mitchell said "Not, not ... from certain sawmills we'll be stopping their supply to us but others we'll continue .... perhaps". And when did you first hear about this decision? "Umm - that's really something I'll keep to myself actually - I don't think this is worth sharing with anyone else."

Reading between the lines it looks like this could collapse the entire EG industry. It's unlikely that alternative customers exist to buy the 200,000 tonnes of 'waste'. Woodchips and waste have been the bread and butter of the East Gippsland industry.

No chip market = no industry. The decision by Nippon's shareholders to stop buying EG wood is due to:

- A shift in traditional markets, the Tsunami and decommissioning of Japanese mills



The seven storey high mountains of chipped trees at the Eden export woodchip mill, will soon stop taking East Gippsland chips

- An increase in plantation chip supply from Vietnam and Taiwan,
- A change in ownership of MIS plantations – ramping up the export of woodchips from Aussie plantations.
- Customers preferring eco-friendly paper.

This announcement has huge implications right across eastern Victoria. Nippon also owns the Australian Paper factory in the Latrobe Valley. This lost \$26.5M in 2013 and \$20M in 2012. Native forest logging in Australia is becoming an economic millstone around the neck of this company.

Will the export chip mill remain open for NSW customers? Peter Mitchell's answer was "Talk to SEFE about that". Our local politicians have been trying to find another large market for the woodchips but the biomass push (burning forest wood for power generation) has gone nowhere for the past 3-4 years.

# The Potoroo Review

This is the newsletter of Environment East Gippsland, Australia's longest running forest campaign group. We bring you the facts about forests and the environment that rarely make it to the mainstream media. We never worry about biting the bureaucracy's hand as it never feeds us. That means we rely totally on membership and donations to keep nipping at the heels of the planet-rapers.



**Membership - \$20 or \$15 conc. includes newsletter.**

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Coordinator - Jill Redwood

**Tax deductible donations can be sent to us at the above address made out to EEG. Receipts will be issued promptly.**

The Potoroo is an endangered 'mini kangaroo' which survives in East Gippsland's forests. It eats underground fungi, so digs a lot of dirt, and like us, is often threatened by loggers.

Articles which appear in the *Potoroo* are the opinions of the authors' and not necessarily those of EEG.

Printed on 100% recycled paper made from 100% post consumer waste, de-inked and bleached (chlorine free process) by Black Rainbow

One reason your *Potoroo* is late was the **bushfire that burnt for two months** (detailed from page 6). We also have a photo album of images on our website and Facebook page.

**Woodchipping could be all over red rover** after almost 50 years. The best news for decades is that the only customer for East Gippsland's woodchips will pull the pin after December! Finding another buyer looks very unlikely.

We've launched another **legal cases, this time for the owls**. If you haven't given us your email, please consider being kept up to date this way. Our *Potoroos* are becoming quite rare.

**VicForests is a wounded beast** and EEG has it in our sights. We recently managed to help stymie its stab at being elected to the board of the FSC, a body which issues eco certification for timber.

Despite a declining forest logging industry that was overtaken by the plantation sector years ago, Mr Abbott and Napthine are still keen to **do away with legal impediments to more logging**,



*Jill's jottings*

such as laws to protect wildlife, and are to allow the burning of native forests as 'renewable power'!

We've been so occupied that we've been neglecting to ask for membership renewals and tax-deductible donations. **Unlike the industry** (which is gifted millions from govts), **we rely totally on your membership and donations**. We're great value for money (even if we do say so ourselves).

Our members are our lifeblood, but more importantly **the greater number of people we speak for the more powerful our voice** (see details below).

If you're a **Facebook** user you can keep up with weekly news by 'liking' our page - [www.facebook.com/EnvironmentEastGippsland](http://www.facebook.com/EnvironmentEastGippsland) and then click the 'like' button to 'get notifications'. Thanks.

Jill

**TO OUR DONORS** - we are incredibly appreciative of the donations we receive. They really do help us to keep the pressure on. We don't have the capacity to personally thank everyone - (especially our *GiveNow* donors) but ... *we know who you are!* So please accept this impersonal but still genuine expression of gratitude.

## HOW TO RENEW

**Membership: \$20 single, \$30 household, or \$15 conc'sn.**

1) Cheque via the post, addressed to EEG, Locked Bag 3, ORBOST, Vic, 3888

2) via our website using PayPal go to [http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=how\\_you\\_can\\_help/join\\_eeg](http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=how_you_can_help/join_eeg)

3) Or direct deposit by internet banking. Please email [info@eastgippsland.net.au](mailto:info@eastgippsland.net.au) for our bank details.

## LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

If you've changed your email address and forgotten to tell us, please can you ping us a hello with your updated address to [info@eastgippsland.net.au](mailto:info@eastgippsland.net.au)

If you have an email address that we don't know about, *pleeeze* could you let us know it. We'd love to have you receive our infrequent news flashes and updates (and we're very protective of our membership list). If you receive the E-Bulletin, you can also share it around amongst your friends.





# Legal challenge # 4! for the owls

The summer fires burnt more than 170,000 ha of forest, including protection zones for the threatened Powerful, Sooty and Masked owls. These areas also would have supported other rare and endangered species.

The law states that the owls must have a specified area of high quality habitat set aside to ensure their survival. But after these areas were burnt, no authority has bothered to abide by this and VicForests continues to plan clearfelling in unburnt areas where owls have been found.

EEG is asking that all logging stop in the region while the reviews happen and until the required areas of owl habitat are protected, or alternatively, that logging stop in 81 known stands of forests planned for logging that have positive owl records in or near them.

**The summer bushfires affected 46 owl protection zones that no longer have the values they were set aside for. The Environment Minister refused to review the zones as a matter of urgency, but DEPI is allowing ongoing clearfelling in unburnt areas that are known to support owls.**

**We believe this is at odds with the government's legal obligations. EEG is again suing both Minister Walsh's Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) and the government's logging monopoly, VicForests.**

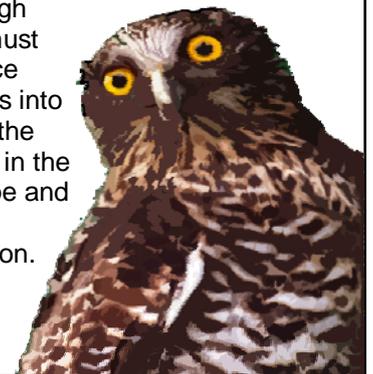
Owls that lived in the now burnt zones could have easily perished as they are very territorial. Old growth and other suitable owl habitat are at a premium across the region. Surviving owls would have found it difficult to move into and survive in poorer habitat that doesn't support a healthy population of their prey species.

Currently the law requires just 800 ha of protected forest per pair of Powerful Owls in East Gippsland, well below what the science says the species requires to survive and raise young. And even this isn't being adhered to, with 93 of the Powerful Owl protection zones in East Gippsland at less than the required 800ha.

Besides totally inadequate owl protection zones and numbers, DEPI approves and then VicForests logs old growth, mature and mixed age forests every year, amounting to potentially thousands of hectares of critical habitat.

A thorough review must take place that takes into account the changes in the landscape and new information.

Jill



## New ~~Federal~~ Threatened Species Commissioner



A senior bureaucrat who was found to have misled a federal Senate inquiry into petrol sniffing and who appeared on an ABC current affairs program under a false identity has been appointed the nation's first 'Threatened Species Commissioner'.

In the Abbott Government's ten months of reign, there has been a

litany of anti-environmental policies including axing of the Climate Commission, plans to dump three million tonnes of dredge on the Great Barrier Reef, attempt to log Tasmania's World Heritage, plans to remove the non-profit tax status of green groups, killing off the Environmental Defenders Offices, federal environmental powers and more. The list grows daily. In the last 50 years the Abbott Government takes the cake for launching the greatest War on the Environment.

Given the above, we were dubious of this announcement. It didn't take long to discover his background.

<https://newmatilda.com/2014/07/02/abc-lateline-s-'fake-youth-worker'-wins-plum-abbott-govt-job>



Greg Andrews; all the skills needed to mislead the country on threatened species.

Mining or Logging will not be threatened by threatened species!

## Minister Walsh says 'Sorry'

False and misleading comments made by Minister Peter Walsh about EEG last October resulted in him making a public apology in March. People have asked if an apology was all we received but we are unable to comment on that. All we can say is that we are happy with the outcome (insert smiley here). The apology to Environment East Gippsland was published on his parliamentary website and in the East Gippsland local papers in early March.

The Minister's media comments in October last year included many disparaging comments including that EEG ...

Oh hell this is going to hurt ...



*"...continue(s) to attack Victoria's responsible and sustainable native forest industry, often wasting hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars".*

Jill

## Change to greener cheaper power

While the three nasty energy companies, Origin, AGL and Energy Australia have mounted an anti-renewables campaign, Abbott is planning to clear the way for native forest wood burnt in electricity furnaces to be deemed 'renewable' energy.

NSW has just passed similar legislation. This allows the industry to gain financial credits, making it more economically viable. It will also be viable to cut forests down that were previously unsuitable for paper making – such as the darker coloured species like bloodwood, box and ironbark.

We need to act quickly to send these power companies two messages:

- That we don't want their dirty power and their lobbying against clean energy.
- That you want them to promise never to sell electricity generated from burning our forests.

You can write to them as a customer and/or join in the mass switch from the *Dirty Three* power companies to genuine renewable electricity retailers, and help save Australia's Renewable Energy Target. [www.getup.org.au/BetterPower](http://www.getup.org.au/BetterPower)  
Or phone 1800 462 668.



## EEG foils VicForests board position

VicForests recently tried to get a board position on the Australian arm of the international wood certification body, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This would have allowed it to influence the way FSC certifies wood producers like VicForests.

EEG is a member of the FSC and so was able to have a member present at the AGM on the 29th May. John Renowden spoke against VicForests' FSC membership and its board nomination. He cited many of VicForests illegal logging activities, our successful legal actions against it and its continued destruction of important forests and wildlife. Luckily for us and the FSC, VicForests narrowly missed out on the position when the vote was taken.

**WHAT IS CONTROLLED WOOD?**

Controlled Wood ensures the avoidance of wood in FSC certified products that come from the following unacceptable sources:

- Illegally harvested wood
- Wood harvested in violation of traditional and civil rights
- Wood harvested from forests where High Conservation Values are threatened
- Wood harvested from forests being converted to plantations or non-forest uses
- Wood from forests in which genetically modified trees are planted



It takes 5-10 minutes to change your power company and Powershop will even pay up to \$75 of any penalty for changing retailers. They are the most ethical and the cheapest. So far they only operate in Victoria but they plan to expand into NSW soon.

# Shorts



## Court proves that Victoria's laws don't protect endangered wildlife

The Leadbeaters Possum court case run by Central Highland group MyEnvironment that challenged the destruction of the Possums' prime habitat was initially lost in March 2012. In a bold move by MyEnvironment that decision was appealed in June 2013 but lost on a technicality. Shamelessly, Napthine and Walsh are now pushing ahead to weaken protection laws even further while clearfelling their homes! Visit the myenvironment website [www.myenvironment.net.au/](http://www.myenvironment.net.au/)



## HRL backs off biomass

HRL Technology in the Latrobe valley had to call a halt to its plans for a study into using 'Wood and Timber Waste' for power generation. It put out a call in mid May 2014 for funds to pay for the study. They were offering their supporters access to the results for a bargain \$2700. By mid-June they had almost no interest so announced the project would be discontinued. However, they are hopeful that with changes in legislation that will allow forests to be burnt for electricity and defined 'renewable', it might then be more financially lucrative and the plan could be reborn.

The reality is that such projects are mega costly, take 3-5 years to build and the fast-moving climate laws (and politics) could change dramatically, making it a dead-loss investment.

## Mother nature worth \$145 trillion

Every year, nature provides \$145 trillion in benefits. To put this into perspective the cumulative gross domestic product (GDP) of all nations as calculated by the World Bank was \$97 trillion in 2012. Australia's ecosystem services were estimated to be worth around \$5 trillion a year, compared to GDP of around \$1.5 trillion (US dollars). The new study published in Global Environmental Change added up all the world's ecosystem services – from carbon storage and crop pollination, to recreation and flood mitigation and the findings are staggering.

29.5.14 <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/the-value-of-the-global-natural-environment-has-been-calculated-for-the-first-time-and-the-news-isnt-good-2014-5>



## Grey-headed Flying Foxes

The healthy colony of Grey-headed Flying Foxes along the Mitchell River in

Bairnsdale is an incredible sight. They are pollinators and seed dispersers. A small but vocal number of local residents want them gone. Listed as vulnerable, they're in decline nationally and can't be harmed by law. So far the Federal and State governments haven't bought into the row to get rid of them. But the East Gippsland Shire Council is planning to cut their roosting trees down.

In early July the anti-bat group flew down David Wescott a CSIRO expert from Queensland who told them that forcing them to relocate off the river's edge could just shift the colony to an even more problematic town site. Read more here <http://candobetter.net/?q=node/3173>

## World Heritage Committee rejects Abbott's claim

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> June, the World Heritage Committee took just eight minutes to consider and refuse Tony Abbott's attempt to de-list Tasmania's World Heritage forests (so he could open them up for logging).

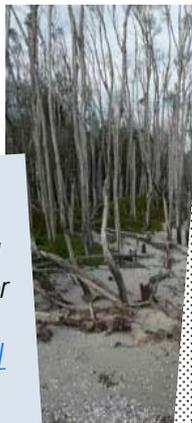
No country spoke in favour of the bid to de-list 74,000 hectares of old-growth forest. Member nation Portugal called it "feeble", and that it was setting an unacceptable precedent for the future. The meeting in Doha sent a clear message to our embarrassing excuse of a Prime Minister.

<http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=node/1051>

## Killing the Lakes with salt – for the offshore oil and gas industry

Lakes Entrance has once again been dug out to a depth that is killing the ecosystem of this Ramsar listed wetland and internationally renowned chain of coastal freshwater lakes. For the expedience of the offshore oil and gas industry, the Lakes are being left to die.

A new govt committee is asking for public comments on future management, but without any decent funds, no monitoring and a worsening of the situation, there's reason to be sceptical. Read more <http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=node/1055>



## Old trees store more carbon

"Rather, rapid growth in giant trees is the global norm and can exceed 600 kg (1,300 pounds) per year in the largest individuals." <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v507/n7490/full/nature12914.html> 15.1.14



## Logging increases forests flammability - new research

New landmark research shows conclusively that **the deadly Black Saturday fires were more extreme due to the thick flammable LOGGING regrowth**. Scientists from Melbourne University and the ANU (Professor David Lindenmayer, Dr Chris Taylor and Dr Michael McCarthy) say the study showed the deadly blaze was more extreme where it ripped through young logging regrowth. The study is dynamic and is published in [Conservation Letters](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/conl.12122/abstract) (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/conl.12122/abstract>).

Read more on our website [here](#) or at the [ABC news website](#).

A complimentary study by Michael McCarthy can also be found [here](#).

The findings have massive implications for whole towns and communities where they are surrounded by regenerating forests 7-50 years after logging.

See also summary of the research on The Conversation: <https://theconversation.com/victorias-logged-landscapes-are-at-increased-risk-of-bushfire-30611> and one which focuses on the long term destruction of natural forests in successive bushfires [canberratimes.com.au/act-news/young-forests-threatened-by-fires-logging](http://canberratimes.com.au/act-news/young-forests-threatened-by-fires-logging)



## The 2014 fire season

A strange weather phenomenon over central Australia in January and February influenced SE Australia's hot dry season. This, coupled with the mid-January lightning storms across Victoria created yet another serious fire season. The summer storms saw 770 lightning strikes, slightly up on the 30 year average of around 600. Many of these self-extinguished or only burnt very small areas. Others were put out. In East Gippsland 10 became problems fires.

### Fire statistics

Statewide, 413,000ha burnt. This included the Mallee/Wyperfeld NP, the Grampains, Kilmore/Midlands fires, Mt Ray/Glenaladale fire, Hearnes Oak/Hazelwood and in East Gippsland the largest being the Deddick/Goongerah fires.

### Goongerah-Deddick fires

These 166,000ha burnt for 53 days until declared 'contained' on March 10th, leaving a seriously devastated landscape with an 850km boundary.

Although there were around 800 or so fire fighting personnel, DEPI, Parks and CFA volunteers, the public is now asking if the resources were inadequate for the task or if the management was simply a schmozzel. Air strike capacity was admittedly very limited due to the numerous fires across the state.

### On the ground observations - destruction on top of destruction

Goongerah has its own CFA brigade and tanker so we were able to observe and be part of fire fighting efforts on the ground. While the work of a few DEPI personnel was quite amazing and appreciated, there was much that wasn't.

Many people were astounded at the way all green forest that had survived the main bushfire and were essential refuge areas for wildlife, were then burnt by DEPI in the hottest driest conditions. As DEPI don't keep proper records of where these deliberate burns or 'blacking out' was done, the public can't ever determine accurately which was a government bushfire and which was the real bushfire.

### Bushfires by design—the new fire control method

Locals had a fairly good idea of what areas were being burnt by DEPI. At best maybe a third to a half of the total burnt area was deliberately lit and at worst possibly three quarters of these blackened forests were 'bushfires by design'.

The new super-cautious policy seems to dictate that fire fighters stay away from flames and certainly not close enough to use water on them. They mostly *light* fires and then patrol the tracks from 9-5pm. CFA volunteers were often left to do the night work after DEPI staff went home. The new arrangement uses bulldozers to punch tracks through the forest, light fires along them and try to coral the bushfire with more fires, adding to the burning edge every day. These regularly escaped. So more bulldozer tracks were put in further out, and more fire lit to burn back in. This might be appropriate for a large bushfire close to settlements, but after the threat passed, it continued for weeks. People from all areas questioned this.

Some strategic burning at a cooler time of day could be useful. But to keep these fires going along every unburnt track, gully, hillside and road miles from anywhere seems like destruction for the sake of fire-fighter deployment. The valuable pockets of unburnt green were wildlife refuges and actually dampened the fire's run, yet were deliberately searched out and destroyed as well!



### Wildlife victims

Some of us put regular food drops out around burnt and semi burnt areas (near water) for the surviving wildlife. And thanks to our donors who helped us buy the feed too. In the high fire severity areas food wasn't eaten. The fires sterilised the forest of all wildlife. This type of burn severity runs for mile

after mile. It's hard to imagine how these ecosystems will recover in anything less than 100 years. Leaves and bushes might grow back, but the entire finely-tuned ecosystem – from fungi, skinks and frogs to the greater gliders and owls will take much longer.

### Hollow tree loss

There was an enormous loss of large hollow trees between 100-600 years old. This will impact on East Gippsland's populations of rare hollow dependent fauna for decades. The thunderous crashing in the surrounding hills was constant day and night, for weeks. Fire, whether by DEPI burns or bushfire doesn't discriminate. The survivors were without shelter or food.



This old giant was unnecessarily felled 40m from a rarely used track, inside the National Park, but near the Brown Mt old growth walk.

What the bushfire and DEPI burns didn't take the bulldozers pushed over. Solid or hollow, leaning or straight, whatever trees survived and grew along roads and tracks became the victims of the government's new 'dangerous trees' policy; chainsaws took them down. The Bonang Road is like a four-lane freeway in places with once standing trees now a flammable mess on the ground. There appears to be no rhyme or reason to this besides maybe a method to gain more funds.

### A new regional economy?

These summer fires have been coined 'Red Gold' because they are so lucrative for the local economy, DEPI personnel and the machinery operators contracted from the logging industry. Not only during the two months of fires but for many weeks afterwards with rehabilitation work. Locals from right across the state question the methods used that did NOT put out the fires but kept them going in a semi-controlled fashion. It is a gravely serious issue that must be explored but the internal review

carried out by the Emergency Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley, overlooked this shocking and avoidable destruction caused by fire management.

This public image is now under scrutiny. Our June 9 report that a new boom industry is flourishing in the bush is the most horrifying aspect of our long and detailed story of the February catastrophe. Overtime rates, knock-off times and mangled orders were the recipe for disaster.

The most chilling statement came from Iguana Creek resident Lance Martin, who said "some paid staff quite often brag about how much money they are making out of fires, and the longer and bigger the fire the better it is for their personal bottom line." No wonder locals say that summer bushfire is the new boom industry.

Only one verdict is possible. An open, independent judicial inquiry must be held. Nothing less will absolve government, fire departments and their personnel from the dismal conclusion that they have failed to do their duty.

*Bairnsdale Advertiser 23.6.14*

We hear that when a fire is declared out of control and dangerous, it is taken over by the state control centre and money flows freely. These fires have cost at least \$140 million and much of that was just shameless waste.

### Autumn planned burns

People are rightly asking how this almost 200,000ha of burnt forest fits in with DEPI's controversial autumn burns. DEPI still planned to burn yet another 33,000ha of forest!

Thankfully this autumn was fairly damp and so many of these forests and the wildlife were spared.

Planned burning of thousands of hectares is a huge issue. The government demands vast areas to be torched as 'ecological burns' without having any decent survey data or credible science. Their justification is that they declare some forests require burning due to this thing called 'Tolerable Fire Intervals', meaning that they (certain plants - not animals) are due for a burn for their own good. No other ecological criteria matters. This is often a desk-guess and requires no assessments, surveys or science. It's populist politics at its most destructive!

### Bureaucracy anxiety

The local communities of Goongerah, Bonang and Tubbut suffered frustration levels reaching

catastrophic. The fires were easy to deal with compared to the fire bureaucracy. Genuine assistance, effective management and reliable info were less common than the poor communication skills and disrespect we received, conflicting information, unnecessary road closures and promised help that wasn't there at crunch time. These are the very same criticisms that we have heard from every other fire affected community since 2003. Whether locals were brown rice eaters or beef eaters, the experiences were much the same.

Maybe this will never change. A misuse of limited resources (remember Baillieu sacked 500 DEPI staff when first in government?), ever changing personnel, confusion dressed up as 'control' and a number of cowboy operators and controllers can make the fire itself seem like an easily managed if sometimes stropopy visitor.

### The real victims

But all this pales into pettiness when compared to the real victims. The most tragic losses, the most unbearable suffering that was rarely mentioned, were endured by the wildlife. There were no radio alerts, no fire bunkers, food parcels or medical aid for them. Those that weren't killed outright, would have suffered horrific burns to their feet, tail and lungs, exposure, hunger, infection and a slow death - or maybe a slow recovery for some.

The forests and animals were taken by flames of the bushfire or DEPI's. East Gippsland has been the last stronghold for so much of the state's once rich wildlife, now more rare since the 3.5m hectares of fires over the past 11 years. Gliders and owls would have to be in major decline, but no one is researching these impacts, certainly not the government; they'd prefer this information wasn't known.

While communities were offered counselling and 'pamper days', and while fences are rebuilt and insurance companies dealt with, the wildlife and forests of Eastern Victoria that have lived with lightning strikes and fires for thousands of years, are at a critical crossroad.

Check out the two pages of photos for a little insight into those 53 days of the event and the aftermath, at the EEG [photo gallery](http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=gallery/fires-2014&page=1).  
[www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=gallery/fires-2014&page=1](http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=gallery/fires-2014&page=1)

### Judicial enquiry essential!

Incompetence, chaos and lack of initial and direct attack on the most problematic fires has us all asking - why did this happen when so much more could have been done? The Emergency Services Commissioner and Minister only offered an internal review (easier to cover-up facts). The community is still demanding a judicial inquiry to fully explore why it was handled as it was. More info here. <http://eastgippsland.com.au/fire-inquiry/>

Jill

### Maremma dogs - actively conserving Bandicoots

Maremmas are giant, white, fluffy livestock guard dogs. They have been trained to effectively protect penguins and are now being trained to help conserve Bandicoots!



Teams of highly trained dogs will be deployed as "bodyguards" for bandicoots threatened by feral cats and foxes, in an initiative which could help reverse the precipitous decline in several other Australian native species.

### Forests carry out their own fire suppression



#### How did forests cope before the era of government planned bushfires?

Australian forests did not burn as often and as hot nor did Aborigines burn to the extent our current 1800s dogma maintains. Forests had many brilliant systems in place that digested leaf litter, kept the understorey damp and a layer of nutrient rich humus at ground level, all operating with clever symbiotic relationships between plants, animals and fungi. This ground level layer is also the bottom



of the food chain for so much of our wildlife. The dense understorey also reduces wind speed, slowing down fires. Fascinating extracts from scientific research explains how important these ground layer ecosystems are – and how vulnerable they are to planned government burns. From Blue-tongued Lizards to Mallee Moth larvae and fungi, these essential and unsung heroes of fire suppression are often wiped out in regular burns. To learn more click this [link](#)



One example is our native

cockroaches that turn dry leaf litter into rich soil!



Cockroaches are an important part of the food chain, composting the ground humus and then offering a light lunch to birds, lizards and frogs.

They are an amazing genus with over 4,000 species worldwide, and over 500 in Oz (only five give the



rest a bad name). David Rentz is attempting to rescue the reputation of Australia's cockroaches in a new book, *A Guide to the Cockroaches of Australia*. Along with termites, bugs and all the little diggers and hoppers out there turning over the forest's humus layer daily, these little guys and gals are doing a mammoth job of 'fuel reduction'.

And then there are all of our little scratchers and diggers, like potoroos, bandicoots, bush rats and lyrebirds...



### Antechinus - our wee marsupial 'mouse'

These wee sweeties were scampering around our homes and in the bush over winter. They are not mice but native marsupials, (yes, with tiny pouches), called antechinus (Ann-te-kyne-us). They can actually kill

and eat mice. Please don't poison or snap-trap them. This one (an Agile Antechinus) was caught inside in a cage trap and released unharmed. Notice their pointy little noses (cute!). They actively dart and jump in a very different way to mice.



## Neil Comrie questions 5% burn target

The controversial 5% burn target across the state has for the third time been questioned by none other than Neil Comrie. He said **“the 390,000 ha target may not be achievable, affordable or sustainable.”** (from the latest [BRCIM's 2014 annual report](#)).



A DEPI planned burn

The Bushfire Royal Commission's Implementation Monitor's 2012 Report advocated that the State reconsider the rolling target for planned burning of five per cent and replace it with a risk based approach focused on the protection of life and property. In 2013, the BRCIM also stated that the 390,000ha target may not be achievable, affordable or sustainable.

*“ ... area based hectare targets alone will not necessarily reduce the bushfire risk to life and property in Victoria and may have adverse environmental outcomes.”*

*“With the benefit of five years dedicated work in this area, the BRCIM considers it may be timely for the State to reconsider [Royal Commission] Recommendation 56, having regard to the positive shift in focus from a numeric area based target to a risk based approach in order to deliver an effective long term program of planned burning”* Pages 47-48.

**Premier Napthine is offering the public a false sense of security via perverse ‘pyro-placation’ politics. It’s criminally destructive, costs around \$300 million a year and is mostly ineffective.**

Those millions could be better spent on more targeted and effective measures directly on or immediately around properties and towns.

The government has every reason now to review its current land and fire management. Significantly, the new research must be considered which shows logging regrowth, a large % of our public land, creates a more intense and deadly bushfire. (see *article page 6*)

Jill



## Captured on camera - the wildlife cost of DEPI burns

**After 463,000ha burnt across Victoria this summer, DEPI still planned to light up another 260,000ha.**

Thankfully they *only* managed to blacken 82,000ha due to timely rain. Bulldozers 'prepared' 400,000ha and DEPI felled the larger habitat trees around boundaries and tracks. The financial cost of these public 'feel-safe' exercises would be millions. But far worse is the cost to wildlife, documented in this short Youtube clip: <http://youtu.be/pEeMj9h2sHMnb>



If this sickens you to the stomach, please [sign the online petition here](#).

The ultimate planned burn target is 385,000 hectares - and of course, hundreds of thousands of animals!

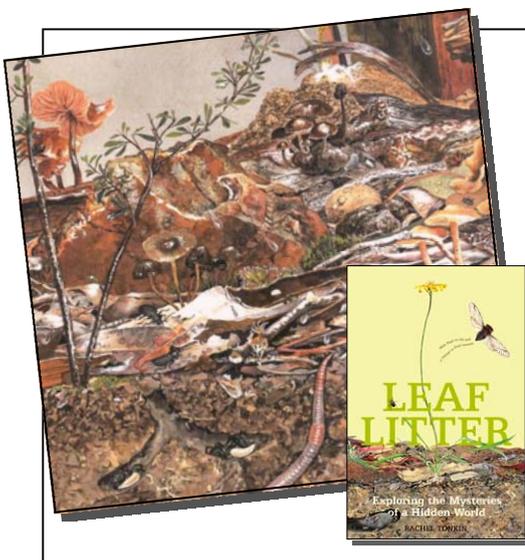
## LEAF LITTER - NOT SO SCARY

This is the best kids (and adults) book around to learn about ecology through 'Leaf Litter'. Leaves, twigs, branches and bark is called 'leaf litter' but it supports a complex and fascinating world of animals, plants and fungi; a busy, secret world we hardly ever see or appreciate. Rachel Tonkin's book is interactive, with flaps to lift and discover surprises hidden beneath the soil. There is also a list of "Things to Find" for each page.

**Not just for kids and parents** but an absolute MUST for your govt fire managers, volunteer fire brigade or anyone believing we need to torch the undergrowth to be safe!

It's a wonderful resource to explore the fragility of our ecosystem and **why a healthy ground layer is so damned essential** to help digest and compost down what is shed by trees .

Just \$20.00 plus p&p at our online [shop](#). 32 pages, approx. 36cm x 23cm. Or pick up from the EEG HQ in Goongerah - ph 5154 0145.



## International spotlight on Abbott



EEG helped to take Australia's environmentalism to the international Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in mid June. Eight environment groups across the country put a bright spotlight on Abbott's plan to dismantle commonwealth environmental protection laws by handing responsibility to the states. We are using the state's failure to implement the forest agreements (RFAs) as an example.

Australia has been a signatory to this global convention since 1992, yet every government since then has failed to meet its international commitments.

Australia is experiencing the fastest rate of mammal decline in the world which is getting worse every year. Abbott's plan is to further push species to the brink by weakening protection of rare wildlife and ecosystems, washing his hands of responsibilities and handing it all to the states. Our report to the CBD detailed why this will be a disaster. EEG along with the ACF, Lawyers for Forests, MyEnvironment, Environmental Justice Australia and others are asking for an investigation into Australia's non-compliance with its obligations.

Read the article that appeared in the conventions newsletter, *Eco*, written by EEG and the Green Institute. *CBD Implementation and Compliance in Australia (PDF)*

[www.eastgippsland.net.au/downloads/Signing-the-CBD-from-47\\_1\\_eco.pdf](http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/downloads/Signing-the-CBD-from-47_1_eco.pdf)

Soon after our presentation, the Australian National Audit Office failed the Abbott government on its ability to oversee or police environmental laws! Read more about this scathing report here

[www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=node/1046](http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=node/1046)

## Abbott to change laws to protect the environment minister

Early in February 2014, a Senate inquiry paved the way for the Parliament to give Environment Minister Greg Hunt legal immunity against future legal challenges to his sloppy decisions on mining or development projects. This seems to be the result of the legal

challenge to his decision to approve mining in Tasmania's Tarkine forests. If it passes, the move will protect the government from being taken to court over the Abbot Point dredging scheme, the Curtis Island gas project, or any other environmentally contentious development in Australia.

27.2.14

Read more here <http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=node/1001>

## Napthine wipes out wildlife and accountability



What do you do as a corrupt government that is caught out breaking the law? Alter those laws of course. Immediately after our Brown Mountain court win we predicted an unethical government would alter the laws rather than honour them.

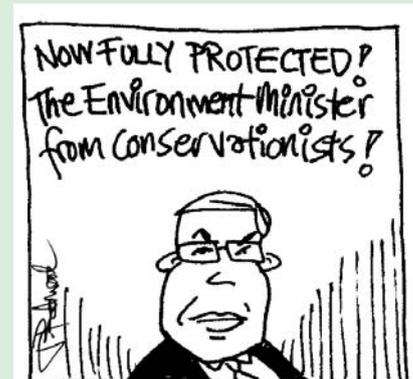
The planned changes to the logging code that operates under the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act are just a more weakened version of the already weak Code. Public comment was a mere formality.

Here is just some of what Napthine plans:

- Despite threatened species declining over the last decade, nowhere are there stronger actions for protecting them.
- There are no definitions to many terms used and where there are definitions, are ambiguous.
- Species-specific prescriptions are missing and others have been weakly rewritten.
- Regulations relating to regeneration and site clean-up after logging are ambiguous
- Biodiversity experts would no longer deal with threatened species zoning rules
- More ambiguity over how or if threatened species protection plans (Action Statements) would be used in logging rules and procedures.

On top of all this, loggers can be exempted from complying with the rules.

You can read the Lawyers For Forests submission to the proposed changes [http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/downloads/LFF\\_code\\_review\\_submission\\_4-4-14.pdf](http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/downloads/LFF_code_review_submission_4-4-14.pdf)



## Our nationally threatened Quoll

Photo: Chris Taylor



### 12 yrs bilateral dithering

**Combined state and federal governments' deliberate foot-dragging could well see our mainland version of the Tassie Tiger become extinct.**

For the last 12 years the Spot-tailed Quoll, although recognised as in deep trouble nationally, has had no recovery plan written. So with no plan, almost no funding and no research, we don't know how close to the edge our spotted marsupial carnivore is. All we know is that the species' range and numbers continue to decline.

The Quoll was nominated to be reclassified as nationally threatened

in 2002. The first draft plan came out in 2004, the second in 2007, third reformatted draft in 2013 and we are still waiting! Meanwhile none of the factors responsible for the species ongoing decline are being addressed.

The federal draft recovery plan has been back to DEPI at least three times, maybe four. The current hold up is again with Victoria, as they decide whether to endorse it or demand the plan be weakened. This is a problematic animal for the state as it could severely hamper Victoria's practice of clearfelling quoll habitat.

The major factors responsible for its decline appear to be habitat loss and fragmentation. Clearing for agriculture was mostly responsible but now its logging. Other factors include use of 1080 poisoning for foxes and dogs, (particularly damaging to small, isolated quoll populations), inappropriate planned burning and potential competition with introduced predators. They have co-existed with dingos/wild dogs

over millennia, but removing dogs allows foxes and feral cat numbers to increase. Removing foxes allows feral cat numbers to swell. Cats compete with juvenile quolls for prey and would also potentially kill young quolls.

This endless merry-go-round from desks in Canberra to desks in Melbourne continues while thousands hectares of habitat are burnt and logged every year with no limits.

**When it's finally extinct in Victoria, will governments then endorse a protection plan?**

Jill



### Approval of poison dumped from planes

**Deadly 1080 poison was broadcast across forested land in Gippsland and NE Victoria during May in an attempt to placate sheep farmers who vote National Party.**

Check this contradictory spin. *"The sites were chosen for their inaccessibility and remoteness, proximity to private land ... and the absence of spot tailed quolls"*. Close to farms but inaccessible? Absence of quolls they claim, because they had put cameras out to check. Not too remote to set up infrared cameras but too remote to hand bury poison baits. Hmmm. Napthine has promised \$1.84 million to carry out 1080 aerial drops over the next four years. You'd think that could employ a few people on foot.

The forests of the North East and Gippsland are the strong-hold of the Spot-tailed Quoll. The 2003, 2006, 2009 and the 2014 bushfires would all have pushed this species closer to extinction.

#### Wider impacts

Despite it being a very poor method

for dealing with wild dogs, the environmental impacts include:

- Thousands of baits would have to be dropped over the landscape to achieve a noticeable reduction in dog numbers.
- Many baits would be taken by non-target animals, like bush rats, goannas, magpies, quolls etc (as well as introduced cats and foxes). Baits can also end up in waterways.
- Dogs populations have a 'spring-back' mechanism as a response to deaths. When the alpha leaders are poisoned pack dynamics are disrupted and subordinate dogs start breeding, increasing the population. Thus baiting starts a vicious cycle.
- Effective reduction of wild dogs will allow kangaroo, wallaby and wombat populations to explode. The increased browsing pressure could then see wallabies poisoned with 1080 – as happens in Tassie.
- 1080 will break down over time. Stale 1080 will merely make dogs sick instead of killing them. Old
- baits could effectively 'bait-proof' dogs or teach them to be bait-shy.

### Dingo poisoning is counter-productive



Poisoning dingoes, the top predators in the Australian bush, has a damaging effect on small

native mammals such as marsupial mice, bandicoots and other small native animals. A recent study found that loss of dingoes after baiting is associated with greater activity by foxes, which prey on small marsupials. Strategies are needed to maintain the balance of nature by keeping dingoes in the bush, while minimising their impacts on livestock. The senior author of the study is Dr Mike Letnic from the UNSW. You can find the study [here](#).

11.3.14

#### The solution?

Many farmers use electric fences, alpacas and Maremma guard dogs very effectively to protect sheep.

Jill

## Environmental campaigns could be made illegal

**The ethical consumer is taking over where corporates and governments fail ... and it's worrying them.**

***Our governments are making protesting illegal, documenting bad practices illegal, taking the government to court unconstitutional, challenging govt decisions too expensive, are cutting environment groups ability to fundraise - and now they are planning to make market or boycott campaigns illegal under new consumer laws!***

Campaigns that help alert buyers to what products are destroying the planet are becoming very effective. *Markets for Change* has been especially successful in highlighting forest-unfriendly products. Abbott is set to declare this democratic right to recommend responsible purchases illegal! It would gag environmentally concerned people if the Abbott

government introduces a law to prosecute groups such as *Markets for Change* and *GetUp!* that run market-based campaigns.

Jill 23.8.13

Read more here - <http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/?q=node/909>

or *The Australian* article [here](#)



## Be alert, alarmed and aware! How PR Spin informs our media

"...PR material ... now occupies about 50% ... of the paper."

"... a lot of the PR people are thinking that the fewer journalists, the less scrutiny their stuff's going to get and the more likely it is to appear in the paper. I mean you only have to pick the paper up yourself and see all the sort of self-serving PR stuff that's now making it into the paper that would have just found the wastepaper bin a couple of years ago."

Ben Hills author (and former Fairfax journalist) *Stop The Presses: The decline of Fairfax How Greed, Incompetence, and the Internet wrecked Fairfax*

quote from ABC's RN Breakfast - interview 30.6.14



## Victorian State of the Environment Report gives poor marks

The last five yearly SoE report (October 2013) shows 65% of Victoria's state forest areas are zoned to be logged. But with unlogged thin corridors and isolated steep slopes within that zone, it means about 45% can be stripped of its forest and wildlife.

In the five years up to 2013, 33 species declined in status and 13 species were added to the Advisory List. Another 13 species were added to the critically endangered category, five to endangered and 12 extra species joined the vulnerable category. The period also saw the extinction in the wild of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot (*Perameles gunnii* un-named subspecies), which was critically endangered in 2007. Available on line [here](#).

## Tree Hugging - Proven to Improve Health

For those of us who find some of our news and the world in general difficult to cope with ...

***"safe, green spaces may be as effective as prescription drugs in treating some forms of mental illnesses".***

In a recently published book, *Blinded by Science*, the author Matthew Silverstone, proves scientifically that trees improve many health issues such as; mental



illnesses, ADHD, concentration levels, reaction times, depression

and the ability to alleviate headaches.

Countless studies have shown that children show significant psychological and physiological effects in terms of their health and well-being when they interact with plants. They demonstrate that children function better cognitively and emotionally in green environments and have more creative play in green areas.

[www.blindedbyscience.co.uk](http://www.blindedbyscience.co.uk)

# SMOKE and ERRORS

Monitor  
air quality

## RECOMMENDATION 5

The State equip itself to undertake rapid air quality monitoring in any location in Victoria, to:

- collect all relevant data, including data on PM<sub>2.5</sub>, carbon monoxide and ozone; and
- ensure this data is used to inform decision-making within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

**So why isn't the Government accepting recommendation 5 of the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry? Peter Ryan claims it's too difficult to ensure carbon monoxide monitoring equipment can get to a site within 24 hours. But how long does it take to drive a hand held CO monitoring device from Melbourne to Victoria's far ends? Six or seven hours max.**

The real answer is more likely to be due to the government wanting to avoid evidence of its own deliberate air pollution every year.

We have all suffered the choking smoke of government autumn burns, more so since 2009. These government decreed pollution events could often prove to exceed health limits for CO and the very dangerous and carcinogenic fine particulate matter called PM2.5.

In an emergency it is the DEPI Incident Controllers that have the responsibility to notify the public when the smoke reaches levels that are dangerous to public health. This

little fact came from the Chief Health Officer during the mine fire inquiry (there's a footnote link to her evidence from the transcript at page T.1155 to T.1160)

[hazelwoodinquiry.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/HMFI-040614-Day08.pdf](http://hazelwoodinquiry.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/HMFI-040614-Day08.pdf)

Smoke isn't just a short term annoyance that effects the elderly or those with respiratory problems. Even for healthy people it has irritants, carcinogens and toxins. Then there is also the less easy to detect, but deadly, carbon monoxide danger. If this reaches 9ppm it should require a community to be evacuated, which is of course costly for governments. You can see why they'd prefer they didn't know how bad it was. A bit like not looking for endangered wildlife before they log.

If the government refuses to accept a simple recommendation to carry out air testing in situations dangerous to public health, then what use are the



other recs relating to responding to that information? We have the recommendations of two inquiries at odds with each other here – the 2009 Bushfire Royal Commission recommended (despite no scientific back-up) a trebling of annual burns, creating masses of pollution that threatens community health. And now the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry that recognises the health dangers of smoke, wants to limit the smoke impacts and ensure an appropriate response to unhealthy levels of smoke and carbon monoxide.

Jill, Sept 2014

## VicForests turns 10

**On the 1st August, VicForests turned 10 and threw itself a party within Parliament House to celebrate a decade of looting, lying, pillaging and bludging. Strong words?**

Since August 2004 it has received \$25 million in grants and subsidies to help it haul \$300 million worth of free logs from public forest for which it still owes Victorians \$74 million in unpaid dividends. This debt to the public could build 10 new schools, pay for 96 additional teachers or deploy five additional Erickson Skycranes each summer.

A Commission of Audit of this protected delinquent is the urgently needed. Read more on our website [here](#)



## VicForests in decline but we're still Aussie's top logging state

Despite being in terminal decline, VicForests recently won the appalling distinction of being the top Australian state for logging native forests. This only shows how badly the down hill run is in other states.

The Eden chipmill manager stated recently:

*"...plantations in Vietnam, Thailand and Sth America produce cheaper chips with higher yields... crowding Australia out of its...once lucrative markets in Japan".*

It wasn't greenies but markets he said:

*"Some...paper companies are...reluctant to take woodchips*

*from Aust. forests because of their contested environmental nature".*

This sounds like the result of greenie campaigns to us.

VicForests copped a couple of serious media whacks during July/August, from both The Age and the [Herald-Sun](#). The Age's [lengthy article online](#) details the decline of the industry in all states and a shorter article on Victoria's situation is [here](#).



## SA blue gum is 2,000 years old

A sprawling, time-worn South Australian Blue Gum is believed to be 2,000 years old. It's truly mind-boggling to imagine what the world was like when this tree began sprouting from a tiny seed. It makes our 600 year old shining gums seem like infants. Read more [here](#).



## Wildlife-friendly fruit tree netting

At last - a bird friendly tree netting. If you have to net fruit trees each season this product uses a finer mesh that fingers can't be poked through, meaning birds and other wildlife are less likely to be caught and die in the nets. They have a Vege net and a Fruitsaver net as well as many good fencing ideas. [www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com](http://www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com)



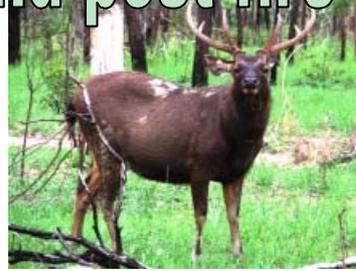
**East Gippsland Inc.**



**EEG AGM**  
**15th Nov 2014**  
**10am**  
**Venue - Goongerah**  
**East Gippsland**  
 (further details on request  
[eeg@eastgippsland.net.au](mailto:eeg@eastgippsland.net.au))  
**All members welcome**

# Deer and post-fire damage

Sambar Deer numbers in Gippsland have been increasing over the years and currently they are now regarded to be in



plague numbers. This is causing ongoing environmental damage to gully and riparian vegetation as well as almost eating bare rainforest areas, some of these being remnant and rare occurrences such as Littoral rainforests along the coast.

Deer survived in moderately burnt areas last summer and are moving back into regenerating zones that were severely impacted. Browsing damage is serious especially along stream sides. They eat back ferns, resprouting rhizomes and mid-storey plants such as bootlace bush and pomaderris.

The only scientific research that's been undertaken in East Gippsland (Bilney, Peel et al and Bilney)

states ..." wide spread anecdotal evidence suggests deer are having a serious detrimental impact on many vegetation types across the landscape" and we "urgently need

hard science to firstly quantify and secondly address this growing problem".

Currently Sambar deer are classified as 'wildlife' and thus protected under the Wildlife Act 1975. They are further classified as a game species, which allows people with a game license to hunt them on public land. Spotting at night is prohibited on public land as it is regarded as unethical, unsporting and unsafe.

There needs to be a re-classification of deer in light of the impacts they are having on agriculture, the environment and bushfire regrowth across thousands of hectares of forest.

Jill

## Goongerah-Deddick fire fighting failures

As a result of the **failures identified in the 2014 Goongerah-Deddick fire fighting operations** an internal [report by Chief Emergency Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley](#) was released in August, focusing on just a few issues. The many concerns raised were narrowed down to:

- Victoria / NSW Cross border fire arrangements
- Initial Attack / utilisation of resources
- Road Traffic Management
- Community involvement in fire preparedness, response and recovery.

There was token mention of the out-of-control damage caused by certain cowboy operators, the deliberate increase of fire perimeter by DEPI (half of total area?), the torching of the unburnt 'safe areas' for wildlife and the overt revenge tactics by bulldozer drivers.

The lucrative financial incentive to keep fires going was open to widespread abuse and cultivated and drove a nudge-nudge-wink-wink mentality. Operators were skiting about the money they made each week. Hopefully the culture of some of the local DEPI staff and their logging contractors will be investigated as part of the overall problem, but of course it wouldn't be politic to criticise some of our well-paid fire 'heroes'.

Kim Wells, Minister for Bushfire Response has appointed Tony Pearce to further investigate and ensure changes are made to deal with prompt initial attack, the use and misuse of resources, the cross-border fire arrangements and why the 200 NSW fire fighters ready and waiting to help were turned away.

This all seems a bit dejavu to us.

In NZ, the overtime was stopped and guess what? So did the fires.

Jill

# FIRE SERVICES

## - FREE OF CHARGE

These little helpers may hold a key to keeping our forests fire-proofed.

Did you know that :

- ◆ a lyrebird can turn over 200 tonnes of leaf litter and bark per year per hectare?
- ◆ our little marsupial diggers spend their nights digging for truffles on the forest floor. Not only turning under leaf litter to compost into soil but also spreading the underground fungi spore that's important for tree and plant health. They have evolved to share nutrients with native plants that otherwise couldn't absorb them if the fungi weren't growing by their roots.
- ◆ there's a myriad of fungi that effectively go about digesting dead leaves and wood turning them into soil all year round.
- ◆ many species of mallee moth (family Oecophoridae) have evolved here to eat dry eucalypt leaves, turning 'litter' into soil and humus. This keeps the forest functioning and healthy.



- ◆ native cockroaches that also convert dry matter into soil

But did you know that:

**DEPI planned burns can destroy all of these! The moth larvae, the insects, loads of fungi and the closed habitat the marsupials and lyrebirds need to escape predation.**

## Things you can do

### Kick the Yellow pages

This year, go from yellow to green by cancelling the delivery of the Yellow Pages. It can be done in a few simple steps online [here](#) or call 1800 008 292 to cancel it and save some trees!

### Change your power supplier

Origin, AGL and Energy Australia have mounted an anti-renewables campaign and Abbott is planning to clear the way for native forest wood that is burnt in electricity furnaces to be deemed

'renewable' energy. It takes 5-10 minutes to change your power company and [Powershop](#) will even pay up to \$75 of any penalty for changing retailers. They are the cheapest and the best -1800 462 668 .

### Donate

Please consider a donation to help us save East Gippsland's forests and wildlife. You can pay via [GiveNow](#), [PayPal](#), [direct deposit](#) or [cheque](#) Contact us for details [info@eastgippsland.net.au](mailto:info@eastgippsland.net.au) or phone 03 5154 0145. Also see page 2.

## CSIRO dumps 33 logging scientists

As a result of the \$110 million budget cut handed to CSIRO by the Abbott government, 33 forestry scientists will be 'let go'. The logging industry complained bitterly but to his credit, Industry Minister MacFarlane defended the move saying "*forestry is retreating in some areas*".

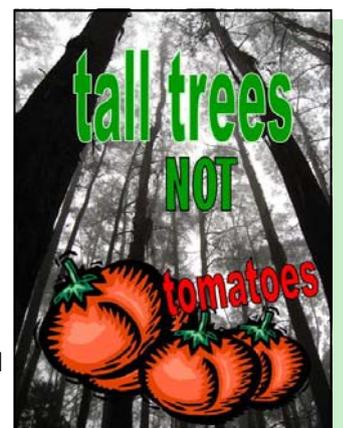
The logging association only contributes one dollar in seven towards research so mustn't be very confident in its own future. In comparison agriculture contributes one dollar in three. CSIRO's forestry research included bio-fuels and bio-products and forestry management.

Listen to the full interview with Industry Minister MacFarlane on ABC Radio National [here](#)

## 60 ha greenhouses to burn 'waste wood'

Will our forests be burnt to warm winter tomatoes?

Energy development company and biomass burning advocate HRL, along with two other companies are claiming they'll heat 60 ha of hydroponic greenhouses by burning 220,000 tonnes of industrial wood waste a year. Coincidentally, it's the same amount the Victorian government is trying to find a buyer for to save the East Gippsland logging industry.



This new intense food production site to be built at Avalon would be the largest in the world. It's a

great way to produce fresh food on a mass scale in a small area all year round, but we wonder what we are not being told about the intended true source of their 'waste' wood. Read more on our website [here](#). Or [The Weekly Times article](#) from the 6th August 2014 or the [ABC Rural article](#).

## NOWA NOWA – the new southern Pilbara?

A 25ha open cut iron ore mine planned for the forests 7 km north of Nowa Nowa (west of Orbost) would have a mine infrastructure footprint of over a hundred hectares with three tailings dams. Its toxic legacy would seriously impact Lake Tyres, a Ramsar listed wetland of the Gippsland Lakes. Not to mention underground aquifers, the forest, local roads and tourism. But the good news is that iron-ore prices are plummeting.

The Environmental Effects Statement has been shown to be a whitewash, and it appears that the government and shire are both keen to fast track the project regardless.

### The biomass connection

We understand it would use magnetic extraction which requires mega megawatts. The local Montana sawmill down the hill has been

granted approval to build a forest-fired electricity generator to supply power locally. It's not hard to join the dots.

Governments must abide by the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty to protect wetlands, but the Abbott government has decided not to assess the impacts under this agreement ... for no reason. This is the Abbott government after all.

### Chipmill link to iron ore mine

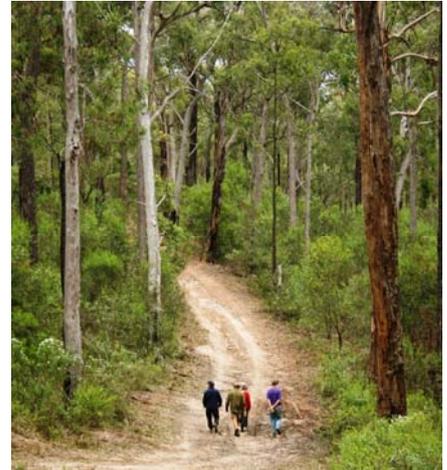
This is very exciting news; the controversial **export woodchip mill at Eden (NSW), has officially reneged on its deal to let iron ore from the planned open cut mine be shipped from their woodchip loading facilities.** This is a very strong sign that it's not looking good for either nasty project now. Eastern Iron's media release says:

*"SEFE has now advised that its Japanese shareholders, ... have decided not to enter into an agreement with Eastern Iron thereby*

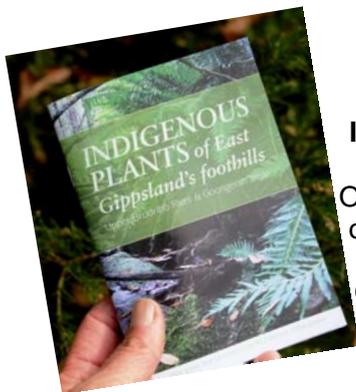
*denying use of the SEFE facility."* The full media release is [here](#)

This new port customer would have helped the chipmill financially. But the Japanese owners have decided that the future is not looking good for the woodchip port. Double hallelujah!

*Jill*



The forests that are planned to be transformed into a massive open pit - or that could remain standing thanks to the demise of the woodchip mill and iron ore prices.



## New plant ID pocket guide

**Indigenous Plants of East Gippsland's foothills. Just \$5 for a full colour 56 page pocket guide.** Order one for yourself and a couple for friends - from our [online shop](http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/shop) or **post a cheque** (plus p&p) to: EEG Locked Bag 3 ORBOST 3888, or **pick up a copy** from the Lakes Entrance or Bairnsdale Tourist Info Centres or the Orbost Landcare office or newsagents.



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