

The following is a collation of information regarding the East Gippsland region, which relates to the EPBC Act and its responsibility towards this region:

(An e-mail to DSE)

Regarding the EVC category of '**Wet Forest**', EVC numbers 8.1 - **East Gippsland Lowlands**, and 8.2 - **East Gippsland Highlands**, why are these labelled as having a Bioregional Conservation Status of "**least concern**" ?

These regions are ecologically worth their weight in gold, and deserve immediate PRIORITY PROTECTION and to be classed under 'RARE' and 'ENDANGERED' at the very least. They are forest communities that deserve EXTREME CONSERVATION STATUS.

So why are DSE allowing these areas to be woodchipped? As an arm of the Government, the DSE are complicit in *direct* and *deliberate* extinction of these Gondwana remnant forest ecologies. Of course, the DSE could recognise the urgency to protect these remnant forests in this day and age, and advise the Government to shift woodchipping/extensive logging operations out of this highly valued, beautiful region.

Whoever is reading this has a say in this, and the power to do something.

Look forward to a response,

Sincerely,

Kellie Gee

Dear Kellie,

Thanks for your enquiry regarding Bioregional Conservation Status (BCS) for *Wet Forest East Gippsland Lowlands* and *Wet Forest East Gippsland Highlands*. The process for determining these EVCs as 'least concern' is consistent with the Statewide approach for assessing BCS.

BCS is determined by assessing the pre 1750 (modelled) distribution of a particular EVC and comparing that area to the current distribution of the EVC. From this we are able to generate a percentage figure, for the depletion of a particular EVC. Dependant on the percentage figure we then assign a BCS rating. These assessments are made on a Bioregional basis, hence the term Bioregional Conservation Status.

The reason why *Wet Forest East Gippsland Lowlands* and *Wet Forest East Gippsland Highlands* were assigned 'least concern' is because relative to the amount of the EVC, pre 1750, there is still relatively large amounts of the EVC left today. The definition of Least Concern is - "Greater than 50% pre-European extent remains and subject to little to no degradation over a majority of this area".

Combinations of depletion-degradation-rarity are also used in determining the BCS. Attached is a copy of Appendix 2 of the framework which provides more detail on how BCS is determined.

With improved mapping techniques we continue to review the BCS for EVCs across Victoria.

I hope this answers your questions.

Regards
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(Another e-mail from someone re the issue)

"The declaration of uplands Wet Forest as Least Concern was probably made in 1996-97 during the RFA process, and was based on fairly inaccurate EVC modelling. Since then the DNRE / DSE's persistence in clearing and burning with high intensity has converted large areas of Wet Forest to Damp Forest. This happens because Errinundra Shining Gum, *Eucalyptus denticulata* is fire sensitive and begins regeneration immediately after logging, then is killed by the 'regeneration' fire the department put through 6 months later. The regen is instead dominated by Silver Wattle, *Acacia dealbata*, Silvertop Ash, *Eucalyptus Seiberi*, and Cut-tail Ash, *Eucalyptus fastigata*.

How typical of DSE management to wash their hands of any concerns without properly considering the facts.

This one interests me: potential to have input into the EPBC Act:
http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/eca_ctte/epbc_act/tor.htm

I'd like the EPBC to actually protect threatened species and provide a clause for community review of departmental stupidity."

(My e-mail to DSE)

To Aaron Gay, DSE Employee,

Attached is a map of the logging history of East Gippsland. Can you really say, after viewing this, that this is an area that has been "subject to little or no degradation...?"

I have seen the forests near Playground Track in 2002, and again in 2008. So much forest has been deliberately taken out - it's so open there now, degraded, whereas only 5-6 years ago it was dense, highly valuable, untouched forest.

The DSE are partly responsible for the deliberate degradation of this highly valued, ecologically diverse/unique area of global significance.

If you never saw it for yourself (areas such as Goolengook), then you don't understand what has been lost, and is continuing to be lost every single day due to the woodchipping industry.

I challenge you to honestly look at the situation in the light of our current world situation, regarding oxygen levels for the planet and the role of forests in these, and to say that you can comfortably work for a company that are allowing the destruction of these places in Victoria.

If you've never been there, go.....before it's too late.

Yours sincerely,
Kellie Gee

