

**EAST GIPPSLAND  
FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN  
AMENDMENT**

**Amendments subsequent to the East Gippsland RFA, 1997**

**Department of Natural Resources and Environment**

**August 1997**

© Crown (Government of Victoria) 1997

Published by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment  
East Melbourne

This publication is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for private study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic photocopying or otherwise, without prior permission of the copyright owner.

Victoria. Department of Natural Resources and Environment  
East Gippsland Forest Management Plan Amendment

ISBN 0 7306 6732 4

**General Disclaimer**

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

## FOREWORD

In February 1997, the Prime Minister of Australia and the Premier of Victoria signed the East Gippsland Regional Forest Agreement (the Agreement), the first of its kind in Australia. The Agreement establishes a framework for management in East Gippsland's forests for the next twenty years.

This document fulfils Clause 51 of the Agreement in which Victoria agreed to publish an amendment to the East Gippsland Forest Management Plan (1996) describing changes to management zones and protection levels, and other commitments arising from the agreement.



Richard Rawson  
Executive Director  
Forests Service

- special groups of organisms, for example species with complex habitat requirements, or migratory or mobile species;
  - areas of high species diversity, natural refugia for flora and fauna, and centres of endemism; and
  - those species whose distributions and habitat requirements are not well correlated with any particular forest ecosystem.
6. Reserves should be large enough to sustain the viability, quality and integrity of populations.
  7. To ensure representativeness, the reserve system should, as far as possible, sample the full range of biological variation within each forest ecosystem, by sampling the range of environmental variation typical of its geographic range and sampling its range of successional stages.
  8. In fragmented landscapes, remnants that contribute to sampling the full range of biodiversity are vital parts of a forest reserve system. The areas should be identified and protected as part of the development of integrated regional conservation strategies.

The Plan includes Conservation Guidelines which establish standards for the protection of different forest values such as old-growth forest, vegetation communities and threatened species. In order to meet these guidelines, the Plan took account of existing national parks and other conservation reserves and, where necessary, set aside complementary areas in the Special Protection Zone in State forest.

The Conservation Guidelines in the Plan and the JANIS criteria are similar in many respects. Consequently, prior to the Agreement, the Plan, in conjunction with the existing reserve system already met or exceeded most JANIS criteria. However some amendments to the forest management zones were negotiated during development of the Agreement.

### **Protection of Forest Ecosystems**

The JANIS criteria require that 15% of the pre-1750 distribution of each forest ecosystem, at least 60% of vulnerable forest ecosystems, and all viable stands of rare or endangered forest ecosystems be included in the CAR reserve system. The criteria include provisions for flexibility to take account of regional circumstances. They also state that, as far as possible and practicable, the proportion of protected areas in Dedicated Reserves should be maximised.

The 44 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) defined by Woodgate *et al* (1994) were treated as 'ecosystems' for the purpose of these criteria. The former extent of these classes on land that is now cleared land was extrapolated from land system maps, vegetation remnants and expert opinion. Two EVCs occurring on public land required enhanced protection to satisfy the criteria.

Foothill Box-Ironbark Forest - While 81% of the pre-1750 extent of this EVC was protected, the entire area was in the Special Protection Zone in the Martins Creek area. The Agreement requires that most of this area, with some minor boundary modifications, become the Martins Creek Flora and Fauna Reserve to increase the proportion of this EVC in the dedicated component of the CAR reserve system.

# INTRODUCTION

The amendment includes:

- an explanation of the role of the National Reserve Criteria in achieving the Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative reserve system in East Gippsland.
- a table of key values in forest management zones created or changed by the Agreement (Table 1).
- updated tables showing the representation of old-growth forest, Ecological Vegetation Classes and National Estate values in different land categories (Tables 2, 3 and 4).
- amended guidelines for the review of management strategies and forest management zones.
- a map illustrating revised conservation reserves and forest management zones (Map 1)

The East Gippsland Forest Management Plan (CNR 1996) makes provision for ongoing amendments in response to new information. Consequently, the Department will continue to update maps and issue revised components of the plan from time to time. This document deals only with those changes arising from the Agreement.

## National Reserve Criteria

The National Forest Policy Statement (Commonwealth of Australia 1992) established an approach to resolving the competing demands of conservation and industry on Australia's forests. This includes a requirement to establish a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) reserve system as a prerequisite to the signing of a Regional Forest Agreement. Accordingly, the Commonwealth and states jointly developed a set of criteria (the JANIS<sup>1</sup> criteria) to guide the establishment of a CAR forest reserve system in each RFA region. The criteria are summarised as follows:

1. As a general criterion, 15% of the pre-1750 distribution of each forest ecosystem should be protected in the CAR reserve system with flexibility considerations applied according to regional circumstances, and recognising that as far as possible and practicable, the proportion of dedicated reserves should be maximised.
2. Where forest ecosystems are recognised as vulnerable, (e.g. approaching a reduction in areal extent of 70% within a bio-regional context and/or subject to continuing threatening processes), then at least 60% of their remaining extent should be reserved. These ecosystems include those where threatening processes have caused significant changes in species composition, loss or significant decline in species that play a major role within the ecosystem, or significant alteration to ecosystem processes.
3. All remaining occurrences of rare and endangered forest ecosystems should be reserved or protected by other means as far as is practicable.
4. Reserved areas should be replicated across the geographic range of the forest ecosystem to decrease the likelihood that chance events such as wildfire or disease will cause the forest ecosystem to decline.
5. The reserve system should seek to maximise the area of high quality habitat for all known elements of biodiversity wherever practicable, but with particular reference to:
  - the special needs of rare, vulnerable or endangered species;

<sup>1</sup> Nationally Agreed Criteria for the Establishment of a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative Reserve System for Forests in Australia. A report by the Joint Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council/Ministerial Council on Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture National Forest Policy Statement Implementation Sub-committee. September 1996.

## Guidelines for reviewing management strategies and zones

The guidelines for reviewing management strategies and zones originally included in the Plan are amended to read as follows:

### **GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ZONES**

Management guidelines in this Plan will be reviewed under the following circumstances:

- When research information on key species becomes available (for example, on completion of the current Long-footed Potoroo research, or population viability analyses for other threatened species).
- If new species are identified that are considered threatened.
- As required by new legislation, policies or Action Statements.

Management zone boundaries may require review if:

- Changes to management strategies for certain species or values mean that the zoning system is more or less than adequate for those values.
- Field inspections or better mapping indicate that minor amendments are required to create practical management boundaries.
- A zone is found not to contain the values for which it was identified; amendments may be required to ensure that conservation targets are met.
- New records are listed for species whose conservation targets have not been met.
- New records of some species warrant changes to zones to consolidate an area of good quality habitat in exchange for an area of poorer-quality habitat.
- Existing boundaries are found to place unreasonable restrictions on the practical access to areas for forest management or for infrastructure development (easements etc).

Proposed zone amendments will be assessed according to whether they:

- Ensure the CAR Reserve System continues to comply with the JANIS Reserve Criteria.
- Adequately conserve the values identified in the Comprehensive Regional Assessment data sets.
- Consider the maintenance of National Estate protection.
- Conserve the values highlighted in the zoning scheme register of this Plan.
- Ensure there is no net deterioration in the level of protection of identified values in the SPZ.
- Ensure there is no net deterioration in timber production capacity.
- Maintain a well-distributed, inter-connected network of protected areas.
- Minimise practical problems for timber harvesting or access in the General Management Zone.
- Make the best use of areas that are unavailable for timber harvesting due to other considerations such as slope, access and site quality.
- Avoid conflict with strategic burning corridors.

Limestone Grassy Woodland - This EVC has been highly depleted by clearing for agriculture. Only 9% of its pre-1750 extent was protected. All remaining areas on public land were identified and placed in the Special Protection Zone bringing the total level of protection to 12% of its pre-1750 extent. The balance of this EVC is on private land. Conservation of these remnant areas is dependent on detailed site assessment and sensitive management. Consequently, the Agreement identifies this EVC as a high priority for preparation of a Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement.

### **Protection of Old Growth Forest**

The JANIS criteria require protection of at least 60% of old-growth forest within each EVC. For most EVCs, this criterion was exceeded by the existing conservation reserve system comprising dedicated reserves and the Special Protection Zone established by the Plan. During development of the Agreement there was discussion about the contribution of narrow linear areas (stream buffers) towards the 60% target. In the case of Wet and Damp Forest the contribution of such areas is two and four percent respectively. The Agreement identifies additional areas of old-growth forest in these EVCs for protection so that the 60% target can be achieved without the contribution of these linear components. The new areas include Ellery Creek catchment (to be added to Errinundra National Park), and various additions to the Special Protection Zone in State forest (Table 1 and Map 1) including a large area in Yalmy forest block

The criteria also require protection of all viable old-growth forest stands within ecosystems where old-growth forest is rare or depleted. Lowland Forest, Herb-Rich Forest, Foothill Box Ironbark Forest and Montane Dry Woodland, fall into this category and additional areas had to be examined for possible protection. While some were found to be too small or fragmented to be viable, and others not to be old growth forest when field checked, numerous changes to forest management zones were made to meet the criteria with respect to these EVCs (Table 1). Most notable among these is the large new Special Protection Zone created in the Betka River Catchment for protection of additional Lowland Forest old-growth.

Other JANIS criteria relating to the size, distribution, representativeness and replication of protected areas were also addressed by the Plan and accredited by the Agreement.

### **Return of Some Areas to Timber Production**

The addition of new areas to the Special Protection Zones to meet the JANIS criteria meant that some other areas within the existing Special Protection or Special Management zones were no longer necessary to meet the requirements of the Plan or the criteria. Such areas were re-zoned to be available for timber production (Table 1).

## REFERENCES

Commonwealth of Australia (1992). National forest Policy Statement - A New Focus for Australia's Forests. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

JANIS (1996). Nationally Agreed Criteria for the Establishment of a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative Reserve System for Forests in Australia. A report by the Joint Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council/Ministerial Council on Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture National Forest Policy Statement Implementation Sub-committee.

Commonwealth of Australia (1997). East Gippsland Regional Forest Agreement.

Department of Natural Resources and Environment (1996). Forest Management Plan - East Gippsland Forest Management Area.

Woodgate P.W., W.D. Peel, K.T. Ritman, J.E. Coram, A. Brady, A.J. Rule and J.C.G. Banks, (1994). A Study of the old growth forests of East Gippsland. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Victoria.





**Table 2. Representative conservation of current and pre-1750 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) on public land**

	Pre 1750 EVC			Current EVC		
	Area (ha)	Conservation Reserves (%)	SPZ (%)	Area (ha)	Conservation Reserves (%)	SPZ (%)
1 Coastal Dune Scrub	3517	98		3442	100	
2 Coast Banksia Woodland	3462	97		3359	100	
3 Coastal Grassy Forest	776	37		289	100	
4 Coastal Vine-rich Forest	90	90	7	87	93	7
5 Coastal Sand Heathland	681	100		681	100	
6 Sand Heathland	98		4	4		88
7 Clay Heathland	2954	40	18	1963	60	27
8 Wet Heath	10029	52	42	9532	55	44
9 Coastal Saltmarsh*	667	119	1	822	96	1
10 Estuarine Wetland	1471	7	8	231	46	52
11 Coastal Lagoon Wetland	862	51	3	462	95	5
12 Wet Swale Herbland	789	100		789	100	
13 Brackish Sedgeland	195	100		195	100	
14 Banksia Woodland	40878	57	15	37585	62	17
15 Limestone Box Forest	8440	31	11	4679	57	19
16 Lowland Forest	276468	23	13	246332	26	15
17 Riparian Scrub Complex	21577	33	46	17137	41	58
18 Riparian Forest	29677	15	24	13668	33	51
19 Riparian Shrubland	659	59	39	648	60	40
20 Heathy Dry Forest	2137	45	22	1707	56	28
21 Shrubby Dry Forest	227069	41	10	210614	44	11
22 Grassy Dry Forest	31482	25	9	18410	44	15
24 Foothill Box Ironbark Forest	603	88	1	603	88	1
25 Limestone Grassy Woodland	5259	8	4	638	65	30
26 Rainshadow Woodland	32727	65	0.1	21561	99	0.2
27 Rocky Outcrop Scrub	5251	54	28	5178	55	29
28 Rocky Outcrop Shrubland	1612	94	5	1608	95	5
29 Damp Forest	245375	28	16	237533	29	17
30 Wet Forest	91193	32	14	90731	32	14
31 Cool Temperate Rainforest	2564	46	54	2563	46	54
32 Warm Temperate Rainforest	7030	33	64	6807	34	66
33 Cool/Warm Rainforest	255	47	53	255	47	53
34 Dry Rainforest	12	96		11	100	
35 Tablelands Damp Forest	5179	34	21	5059	35	21
36 Montane Dry Woodland	65694	47	8	48451	64	11
37 Montane Grassy Woodland	19338	18	3	6368	53	10
38 Montane Damp Forest	14477	71	5	14475	72	5
39 Montane Wet Forest	13646	75	2	13646	75	2
40 Montane Riparian Woodland	3055	13	8	701	55	35
41 Montane Riparian Thicket	37	12	88	37	12	88
42 Sub-alpine Shrubland	201	100		201	100	
43 Sub-alpine Woodland	7870	85	4	7607	88	4
44 Treeless Sub-alpine Complex	1256	76	10	1090	88	11
23 Herb-rich Forest	21880	7	23	10677	15	47
Dunes	1954	99		1929	100	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1210445</b>			<b>1050368</b>		

**Notes:**

The Pre 1750 area shown includes both Private and Public Land.

Information on current EVC protection applies only to Public Land.

Conservation Reserves includes all Parks and Other Nature Conservation Reserves.

SPZ = all parts of the Special Protection Zone including Code of Forest Practices buffers.

Water bodies are not included in this table

\* Coastal Saltmarsh is thought to have increased in area since 1750, due to the incursion of salt water in the Snowy River estuary.

Consequently it is shown as having greater than 100 percent of its former extent.

**Table 4. Representation of extensive national estate values in conservation reserves and management zones.**

National Estate Value	Area '000 ha	Conservation Reserves %	SPZ %	SMZ %	GMZ (timber) %	GMZ (other uses) %
Wilderness	177	92	3	<1	4	1
Endemic Flora	192	54	17	4	20	4
Biogeographic Range of Flora	117	90	3	<1	1	0
Refuge Dependant EVC's	157	76	8	1	8	<1
Places important for Succession	186	64	11	1	14	10
Old-growth Forest	177	65	12	2	9	12
Fauna Refugia	83	43	35	1	15	2
Natural Landscapes	361	71	9	1	11	8
Ecological Vegetation Classes	545	62	12	2	13	9

Note: The balance to make up 100% for each value is located on private land