



Tuesday 23 October 2018

## **VICTORIAN ENVIRONMENT MINISTER FAILS TO PROTECT ENDANGERED GREATER GLIDERS NEAR BAIRNSDALE**

Gippsland Environment Group (GEG) is alarmed at the failure of the Minister for the Environment Lily D'Ambrosio and DELWP to prevent the destruction of Greater Gliders and critical habitat in the foothills north-west of Bairnsdale despite knowing of their presence for over a year.

Vic Forests has recently logged a 50 hectare coupe on Stoney Creek Rd in Mt Alfred State Forest north-west of Bairnsdale where endangered Greater Gliders were recorded by GEG in citizen science surveys.

“It’s disgraceful that two years after the Greater Glider was listed as nationally endangered that the Victorian Minister for the Environment has still not implemented protection measures for the species,” said John Hermans President of GEG. “Last year GEG reported the presence of the Greater Gliders and high value habitat at this site to DELWP and the Minister and requested urgent intervention as Greater Gliders have no protection whatsoever from logging under the current Gippsland Forest Management Plan.”

“The Greater Glider was listed under the national Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act in May 2016 and under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act in June 2017. The Greater Glider was once a common arboreal species in south-eastern Australian forests but has experienced a dramatic population decline in the last twenty years primarily due to logging and burning of its habitat.”

“The FFG Act requires DELWP to prepare an Action Statement to protect the species but despite promises of its imminent release”, said Mr Hermans, “there is still no Action Statement.”

“GEG wrote to the Minister for the Environment last year following the listing of the Greater Glider under the FFG Act requesting interim protective measures to be applied in all Victorian state forests until the required Action Statement was produced. GEG received no response from the Minister.”

“The Stoney Creek Rd coupe was the last patch of forest on the north side of Stoney Creek Rd that still contained significant numbers of large old hollow bearing trees which Greater Gliders require for dens. The site also contained good quality stringybarks and mountain grey gums, key food sources for the species. Greater Gliders have a home range of only 3-4 ha and do not move elsewhere if their home is destroyed by logging; they inevitably die.<sup>1</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-29/vicforests-says-experiment-very-likely-to-kill-greater-glider/10025588>

“It is a very poor effort by Minister D’Ambrosio that under her watch DELWP has failed to implement state-wide protection for the Greater Glider in a timely and effective manner. Over a year ago the government’s own Scientific Advisory Committee recommended that strong protections for the species must be created but this advice was rejected by DELWP<sup>2</sup>.”

“The longer the Minister delays releasing the Action Statement the closer Greater Gliders slide to extinction,” said Mr Hermans.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/scientists-warn-greater-glider-faces-extinction-and-want-it-protected-from-logging-20170602-gwjbff.html>