

Friday 14 June 2019
MEDIA RELEASE



ASSAULT BY DELWP ON GIPPSLAND PARKS AND RESERVES

Hundreds, possibly thousands, of trees have been felled in protected forest areas with the approval of the Department of Environment Land and Water (DELWP), in what has been described as an excessive and extremely environmentally damaging operation.

Gippsland Environment Group has documented the irreparable damage to much loved and picturesque roadsides into the highly significant Cabbage Tree Palms Flora Reserve near Cape Conran and into the old Mitchell River Weir and Billygoat Bend in the Mitchell River National Park. Roadside trees have been clear felled by contractors under the guise of 'worker safety' as part of planned burning preparations.

“Visitors to East Gippsland’s favourite holiday destinations over the Queen’s Birthday long weekend discovered to their horror that their favourite bush haunts had been transformed into a virtual logging coupe,” said Louise Crisp, secretary of Gippsland Environment Group.



Above: Cabbage Tree Palms Flora Reserve - felled trees 8.6.2019

“DELWP and Parks Victoria have permitted hundreds, possibly thousands, of trees to be felled in protected areas in what is clearly an excessive and extremely environmentally damaging operation,” said Ms Crisp



Above: Cabbage Tree Palms Flora Reserve - felled trees 8.6.2019

“The Cabbage Tree Palms Reserve has now been partially destroyed by DELWP contractors. The Cabbage Fan-palm is one of the earliest flowering plants to appear on earth. The stand at Cabbage Tree Creek is the southernmost stand in Australia. The Fan-palms were observed by government botanist Ferdinand Von Mueller in 1854. In 1886 the Tambo Shire reserved 100 acres along the Cabbage Tree Creek to protect the palms and the surrounding warm temperate rainforest.”

“It is outrageous that in this scientifically significant Reserve massive old solid mahogany trees that were here when Von Mueller visited have now been felled right to the edge of the rainforest. The vital protective vegetation buffer has been eliminated and bulldozers driven straight through damp gullies at the edge of the wetland,” said Ms Crisp.

“Further west in Mitchell River National Park the tree felling begins just beyond the Park sign forbidding the chopping down of trees! More than 500 trees have been felled in the two kilometres down Old Weir Rd to the camping site above the river. Even more have been felled in the Park on the western side of the river along the road into Billygoat Bend.”



Above: Mitchell River National Park Entrance, Old Weir Rd - felled trees. 11.6.2019

“Mitchell River National Park is of international environmental significance and is listed under the IUCN Category II to be managed primarily for ecosystem conservation but that hasn’t prevented DELWP from destroying the very environmental values the Park was established to protect.”



Above: Mitchell River National Park, Old Weir Rd - felled trees 11.6.2019

“The Minister for Environment Lily D’Ambrosio must intervene immediately to put a stop to the carnage and investigate DELWP’s assault on nature in East Gippsland,” concluded Ms Crisp.

Media contact: info@geg.org.au