



# Department of Sustainability and Environment

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12 September 2005

Dear Sir/Madam

## **DINGO CREEK**

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the protection of Dingo Creek in East Gippsland. Your correspondence has been referred to me for reply as the matters you raise fall within my area of responsibility.

Dingo Creek is located in far East Gippsland on the Errinundra Plateau. These forests are managed in accordance with the East Gippsland Forest Management Plan and various National Park and Reserve Management Plans. As a result of extensive land use-planning processes over the last 25 years, the East Gippsland region has a world class comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserve system. The CAR reserve system meets, and in most cases, exceeds the nationally agreed criteria for the protection of wilderness, old growth and biodiversity values.

More than half of the East Gippsland region (some 580,000 hectares) is included in the CAR reserve system and only about one quarter of public land is actually available for timber harvesting. Of this, less than 2% (or less than 0.4% of all public land in the region) is harvested each year in accordance with the Code of Forest Practices for Timber Production. More than 85% of all old growth forests in the East Gippsland region is in the reserve system or otherwise unavailable for timber production.

Rainforest on public land in Victoria is protected. The East Gippsland Forest Management Plan provides the definition of rainforest as well as more specific, working guidelines for the field identification of rainforest in East Gippsland. Additional guidelines are currently being developed to assist in the field identification of rainforest.

Most of the rainforest sites of national significance are protected in the park and reserve system or are included in Special Protection Zones within State forest. Although some parts of these national sites are not protected, these comprise the surrounding eucalypt forest, which have been included in the sites to form logical geographic boundaries. The forest management planning processes described above have taken into account the significance of each rainforest stand within these sites and afforded appropriate protection as required.

I am aware that there is some concern that the protection of national sites of significance for rainforest should be afforded greater protection. This is an issue that can be considered in the forthcoming review of the Code of Forest Practices for Timber Production.

### **Privacy Statement**

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The Code review will commence shortly and I would encourage you to actively participate in this review to ensure that your views are fully considered.

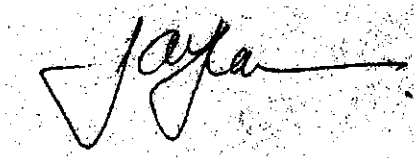
Prescribed burning in State forest in Victoria is carried out in accordance with strict prescriptions that are designed to contain the fires and protect nearby environmental values, such as rainforest. Logging coupes in State forest in the Dingo Creek area are managed by VicForests and will generally be burnt after harvesting is completed, as part of the regeneration process. Any regeneration burns carried out by VicForests will be conducted in accordance with DSE prescribed burning prescriptions.

While the main purpose of a regeneration burn is to provide a good seedbed and induce seedfall, the fire also removes forest fuels for a period following the burn, thus reducing the likelihood of wildfire.

Coupes in the Dingo Creek area are approved coupes on the 2004 Timber Release Plan. The Timber Release Plan is produced by VicForests and approved by the Department of Sustainability and Environment in accordance with the *Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004*. The planning of these coupes has been carried out in accordance with the current land use planning provisions.

Thank you for your interest in these very significant environmental issues.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janine', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right. The signature is set against a background of a light, speckled pattern.

**Janine Haddow**  
Executive Director  
Parks and Forests