

MISCELLANEOUS OREN DOUCMENTS

1. Observations regarding by Chris Tipler of ALP New Solutions policy
2. Otway Tiger Quoll Campaign Update – June 2000
3. Moyne shire Council - 22 February 2000
4. Establishment of OREN Melbourne Otways Forests Group

6. ALP (VIC) FORESTS POLICY

Some Observations

1. Many parts of 'New Solutions' point in the right direction:
 - 4.4 Emphasis on tourism, green technologies.
 - 4.5 Regional business plans based on the competitive advantages of each region.
 - 4.18 Tourism.
 - 4.26
 - Timber strategies must be consistent with environmental platform.
 - Emphasis on farm forestry.
 - 6.11 "Maintaining clean and healthy water is an important responsibility of government".
 - 9
 - "A commitment to ecologically sustainable development and biodiversity protection".
 - "Sustainable management of forests that provides for conservation of biodiversity, collection and storage of water ..., timber production from strictly designated areas, soil protection, etc".
2. But the implications of these general directions need to be spelled out. The 'New Solutions' policy, if the ALP is serious, implies a lot with respect to forests.

Specifically:

 - Logging in water catchments would be eliminated as inconsistent with policy.
 - Similarly, logging in high erosion zones would be eliminated.
 - Buffers and setbacks around rivers (in non-catchment areas) would be substantially increased.
 - NRE wouldn't manage forest catchments - a fundamental inconsistency.
 - Short-rotation logging (cycles of less than 200 years) is inconsistent with the maintenance of biodiversity and would not be allowed in native forests.

- An independent watchdog would regularly audit/check on NRE's activities (at present NRE writes its own report card. Under this arrangement there are constant breaches of Codes of Practice and forest management plans that go unnoticed unless groups like OREN act as the 'policeman' - and our powers are limited).
- Information on forests and forest management would be freely available (you wouldn't have to fight for it using FOI).
- There would be a lot more people in NRE devoted to Conservation (most of the conservationists were sacked when Kennett came to power). Indeed, the whole culture of NRE needs to change, implying the need for a Minister and senior department staff whose interest is first and foremost in conservation.
- Finally, but perhaps most important, the export of woodchips made from native forest timber would be banned. Where logging occurred, the so-called 'debris' would be left to rot down and sustain the next generation of trees.

3. ALP Forest Policy also needs to recognise important regional differences that change the balance of values. In Western Victoria, water and tourism are overwhelmingly more important than timber values. In these regions logging of native forests should only occur on a very limited basis (no clearfelling) to produce high quality timber products. In these regions, any growth of industry based on eucalypt species would be plantation-based. Remember that in these regions we have already lost most of the native forest that was standing in 1788.

In regions like Gippsland, a greater emphasis on timber values may be appropriate, provided it is consistent with general policy (which it isn't at present). This is where the CAR system is completely inadequate. In East Gippsland nearly half of the Forest Management Area has been designated a production zone (an area of 350,000 hectares). Current NRE plans indicate that the average age of the forest in this zone will be dramatically reduced within 30-40 years - ie, it is rapidly being turned into a huge plantation of young trees. In this timeframe, there will be no trees over 100 years of age in the production zone; therefore no tree hollows and therefore no habitats for a large number of animal and bird species. Remember that this happened as the result of an RFA process!

4. This raises the whole question of how the forest is managed. I believe that ALP policy should provide for a completely independent review of native forest management principle and policy by a small, thoroughly expert, group consisting of people with both global and local expertise. This group would need to look, as part of its terms of reference, at the whole approach to sawmilling which emphasises high throughput and leads to the generation of large amounts of waste that, in turn, drives an emphasis on woodchips. It is the 'growth for growth's sake' paradigm that is leading to the destruction of our forests.

Christopher J. Tipler
July 12, 1999



OTWAY RANGES ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

OTWAY TIGER QUOLL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

June 2000

LOGGING AT RILEY'S RIDGE PLANNED NEXT SUMMER

Riley's Ridge is a critical wildlife corridor for Tiger Quolls. Despite six months of blockades at Riley's Ridge, the Department has reallocated the ridge for logging next Summer. The final Wood Utilisation Plan for the 2000/2001 logging season shows the three Riley's coups back on with plans to continue work where the tree village was located. DNRE plans to completely log all of Riley's over a three year period. Logging cannot recommence until the start of September. It is likely if unchallenged, DNRE will recommence clearfell logging in October or early November when the weather improves.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT ZONE (SMZ)

The West RFA placed all of Riley's Ridge into a SMZ. There are 1000 Ha of SMZ in the Otways designated specifically for Tiger Quoll habitat. Of the 1000 Ha, at least 500 Ha has to be maintained as suitable prey habitat at any point of time. However there is no specific definition of suitable prey habitat.

The RFA Consultation Paper required a SMZ plan to be prepared before harvesting operations can commence within a Tiger Quoll SMZ (See page 48 Table 3.4 of Consultation Paper). However the requirement to do a SMZ plan to protect Tiger Quolls was dropped when the final RFA was signed.

A key phrase on page 50 from the West RFA outlines what is to be done for Tiger Quoll preservation and makes the link with the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act via an Action Statement.

“Design of the CAR reserve system addressed the conservation of habitat for Spot-tailed Quolls through the protection of approximately 1000 hectares of suitable habitat for records categorised as acceptable in the Atlas of Victorian Wildlife. Protection afforded by existing parks and reserves was considered and where necessary, new reserves were established in State Forest. For each record located in State Forest, 500 hectares of suitable habitat is protected in the CAR reserve system (including adjacent formal reserves where possible). Unless otherwise protected, a further 1000 hectares will be maintained within SMP contiguous with the CAR reserve, of which 500 hectares is maintained as suitable prey habitat at any point in time. These measures address the potential sensitivity of the Quoll to disturbance associated with timber production and supplement the requirements of the Action Statement, by taking account of the new information that has become available since its publication. Other measures, such as the protocols for the use of 1080 baits, will be addressed through forest management processes.”

The Action Statement for the Spot-tailed Quoll is currently under review. Parties agree that the extent of reservation and associated measures implemented in this Agreement will provide sufficient protection for the Spot-tailed Quoll pending the completion of the formal review of the Action Statement.”

TIGER QUOLL ACTION STATEMENT No. 15

Action Statement No. 15 within the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act provides management prescription to protect Tiger Quolls. Unfortunately this Action Statement does not list any specific prescriptions for protecting Quoll habitat from logging activities.

However when the Quoll was first listed for protection in the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act under nomination 146, logging practices that cause habitat fragmentation were cited as a major threat and reason for listing.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON A NOMINATION FOR LISTING. Nomination 146

Criterion 1.2 *the taxon is significantly prone to future threats which are likely to result in extinction.*

Evidence

Tiger Quolls are only recorded in or near forested areas. Continuing forest clearance and disturbance has greatly reduced the habitat of the Tiger Quoll and its prey species. Further forest clearance and expansion of logging into areas which the Tiger Quoll still inhabits is likely to further affect its future survival. Competition with introduced predators, especially foxes, is likely to be a major threat. The remaining populations have now become genetically and geographically isolated by the effects of clearing and this disjunct distribution makes the Tiger Quoll susceptible to local disasters.

The Tiger Quoll Action Statement did pick up on the problem of habitat fragmentation. This is mentioned in a section titled *Other Desirable Management Action* where it states:

Efforts to incorporate wildlife corridors between major conservation reserves will be promoted

RILEYS RIDGE WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Riley's Ridge contains a strip of forest that joins the forest within the Otway National Park, Aire River Catchment and West Barham catchment with the Eastern Otways (See Map).

To the North of the Riley's Ridge forest is the extensive Aire Valley Pine plantation. To the South of the Riley's Ridge is cleared farmland. Clearfell logging in 1999 reduced the connecting forest corridor by about one kilometre. It is estimated a remaining two-kilometre strip of Riley's Ridge forest now forms only the remaining wildlife corridor.

A report on Tiger Quolls in the Otways by Chris Belcher (Feb 2000), lists the existence of Quolls in the Otway National Park and the headwaters of the East Barham River. Riley's Ridge forms the only native forest wildlife corridor between these two known records. A deep-forested valley still exists on Riley's Ridge that could be the last passage for Tiger Quolls via a saddle. The Chris Belcher report has a record of a Quoll being present on Riley's Ridge within the last two years.

FLAWED CAR RESERVE SYSTEM FOR RILEY'S RIDGE

The final RFA CAR Reserve System has a SPZ wildlife corridor 200 metres wide on the southern end of Riley's Ridge. This corridor follows the boundary of existing fence lines and cleared private land. The proposed corridor is the same as the existing reserve in the OFMP. The West RFA has provided no scientific justification showing that the location and width of the existing wildlife corridor is adequate to protect the Tiger Quoll from habitat fragmentation.

ALP COMMITMENT TO THE FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE ACT

The statement on page 50 in the WEST RFA makes a statement that the Tiger Quoll Action Statement will be formally revised. It is not known how long this will take or if a requirement for logging prescriptions will be added.

The Bracks government has made an election commitment to enforce the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. In a recent budget allocation to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment an additional \$12.8 million has been allocated to Forest Management for the 2000/2001 financial year. Some of this money will be spent to provide resources to DNRE to meet requirements of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988).

When the Action Statement is revised it must provide prescriptions to deal with the threats from logging operations and habitat fragmentation outlined in the Final Recommendations for Listing (Nomination 146). Failure to do this will show a lack of concern by the Bracks government for the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988).

ADDITIONAL RILEY'S ISSUES

National Estate

A CRA report titled "*The National Estate Identification and Assessment in the West Region of Victoria*" identifies the **Barham Catchment which includes Riley's Ridge as having natural landscape values that have national estate significance.** (See Section 3.2.1 Natural Landscapes, Table 3.2 Page 35).

Habitat Fragmentation

Already there is widespread fragmentation of the Otways State Forests as a result of past land clearing, clearfell logging and plantation establishment. **Habitat fragmentation as a threatening process for fauna in Victoria** is currently nominated for listing within the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* as a threatening process.

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear in the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act that habitat fragmentation and logging operations are a threat to the survival of the Tiger Quoll. There is a strong argument that the persistence by Forestry Victoria to continue clearfell logging at Riley's Ridge will cause habitat fragmentation and that logging operations will be illegal under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

Since the West RFA relies on the Action Statement No 15 for management prescriptions, a breach of the West RFA will also occur if logging continues at Riley's Ridge. Enough evidence exists to strongly indicate Tiger Quolls may be using Riley's Ridge as a wildlife corridor.

There has already been a protest camp at Riley's Ridge for 6 months and conflict will occur again if logging re-commences. It is highly likely that there is no basis for arguing the logging is legal. DNRE may have difficulty in charging conservationists for hindering lawful logging operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further logging must be halted along Riley's Ridge since it is likely to be illegal and will cause major habitat fragmentation within the Otways that will affect the Tiger Quoll and other species.
- A SMZ plan should be prepared before logging operations commence within all Tiger Quoll SMZ. These plans must allow for public input.
- When the Action Statement is revised it must provide prescriptions to deal with the threats from logging operations and habitat fragmentation outlined in the Final Recommendations for Listing (Nomination 146). The action statement must also reflect the requirement from the West RFA to provide logging prescriptions.
- No logging within any SMZ should occur until the Action Statement is revised and SMZ plans are completed.



COPY

Ref: C150/3/PR/sk

23rd February 2000

Mr Robert Fordham
Chair
West Victoria RFA Independent Panel
PO Box 502
EAST MELBOURNE 3002

Dear Mr Fordham

The Moyne Shire Council at its Council Meeting on the 22nd February 2000 considered the 'West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement Consultation Paper'.

After consideration the Moyne Shire adopted the following:-

That Council advises the Victorian Regional Forest Agreement Committee that:

- (i) detailed research should be undertaken regarding the impact of logging in the Otways on water quality and quantity, in particular the water supply catchment that supplies the Otway Pipeline before this agreement is signed; and
- (ii) the report should consider restricting logging operations to areas which are less strategically important for water catchment purposes.

Please find enclosed the full report as considered by Council.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Peter Reeve".

PR Peter Reeve
DIRECTOR SERVICES PLANNING

encl.



Otway Ranges Environment Network



www.oren.org.au www.otways.info melb.oren.org.au

P.O. Box 204, Apollo Bay, 3233

May 9th 2002

Dear friend of the Otway forests,

Formation of a Melbourne Otways Forests Group

The Otway forests needs your help now. With the coming State election, now is the time to put pressure on both major political parties to stop destructive clearfell logging in Otway biodiverse native forest.

Over the past few years the Otway Ranges Environment Network (OREN) has won the logging debate with the community. This has culminated in regional local government support. The Geelong City Council, Warrnambool City Council and Surf Coast Shire Council all oppose logging native forest in the Otways. Powerful woodchip lobby groups are applying immense corporate pressure on the State Government to continue the destruction.

Melburnians familiar with the Otways have repeatedly expressed concern about continued clearfelling of our Victorian treasure. We are asking supporters to form a Melbourne group to assist the Winter/Spring campaign for the Otways.

We therefore warmly invite our Melbourne supporters to a meeting that will set up a Melbourne Otways group.

Together, though community strength, we can protect the Otway forests for future generations.

Yours Sincerely,

Margaret Jennings
for OREN

FORMATION OF MELBOURNE OTWAYS FOREST GROUP

DATE: Monday May 27th 2002

TIME: 7.30pm – 9.00pm

ADDRESS: 4th floor, Ross House, 247 Flinders La (bw Eliz and Swanst. Sts)

RSVP: Contact Margaret Jennings by Sunday 26th, leave message on 9439 2436.

A meal is available before the meeting, from 6.00-7.30pm (\$18) at Manchester Lane bistro opposite Ross House. Contact Margaret Jennings by Sunday 26th May for dinner bookings.

OREN Apollo Bay – 5237 7439 Geelong – 5221 0314