

29th Jan, 2018

Suzanna Sheed
Member for Shepparton

Dear Suzanna,

Our Goulburn Valley Environment Group (GVEG) and local community is deeply concerned about the Victorian Government's intention to log another section of the precious Strathbogie State Forest – this time a 65 hectare coupe at Barjarg Flat which contains mature forest, many large, old trees, some of the highest densities recorded in Victoria of the nationally threatened Greater Glider, and a population of the threatened Powerful Owl which is meant to be protected under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act*.

We find it ironic that the Government's Biodiversity Plan launched in 2017 emphasised the importance of having a healthy environment to support a healthy society, and supporting regional communities, yet this government seems to be hell-bent on ripping the heart out of one of the last healthy patches of forest left in our region. Over the last three years, we have written repeatedly to the Premier, the Conservation Minister, the senior bureaucrats in the Conservation Department and to the Agriculture Minister requesting that a moratorium be placed on all timber harvesting in Strathbogie State Forest until a VEAC investigation is undertaken to recommend appropriate use of the public land. The Government has refused to listen or act, however, despite its Biodiversity Plan stating that it will increase opportunities for all Victorians to help protect Victoria's environment.

We write, therefore, to seek your help in protecting these forests. Specifically, we request the following:

- that as our local member you take our concerns directly to Minister d'Ambrosio and seek a moratorium to the planned logging on behalf of our local community;
- your support for a media event in the Carlton Gardens opposite the Minister's office, where we could explain to the media that what we are facing is the loss of a forest patch with trees which are just as large and special to us, as these trees and garden are to Melburnians.

There is strong historic connection between our local community and the Strathbogie Highlands with many families owning land in this unique and highly attractive forested area which is increasingly coming under threat of destruction.

The planned logging of Barjarg Flat is imminent and we therefore request an urgent response from you on these points. A delegation of us would be happy to meet with you as soon as possible at a time which is convenient to you.

Yours sincerely,



John Pettigrew

Goulburn Valley Environment Group