

I am writing to make a submission to the Reviewer and to register my strong support for the Save Our Strzeleckis Forest Coalition whose objective are:

- 1/ A 30,000 ha. National Park for the Strzelecki Forest:
- 2/ The restoration of native forest classification to the areas in the Strzelecki State Forest that have been incorrectly classified as plantation.
- 3/ The urgent reservation of the high biodiversity 'Cores and Links' identified in the 'Strzelecki Ranges Biodiversity Study'.

The Coalition have identified several issues as requiring the urgent attention of the independent reviewer and to urge hhe/she making recommendations to resolve the issues immediately.

- 1/ The Strzeleckis bioregion does not have a CAR reserve system. Less than 2% of the bioregion is in formal reserves.
- 2/ The issue of the Government leasing native forest to Hancocks as plantation has not been adequately dealt with.
- 3/ The Victorian Government has not even formally reserved the high biodiversity 'Cores and Links' which was seen as an urgent priority by the community

As a long term resident of South Gippsland I am provoked by the fact that, although so little of the Strzelecki forest exists today, it is still being logged. It is time to challenge the history of continuous land clearing in Gippsland. It is connected directly with the pressing issue of global warming and climate change and it is vital that we now work towards urgently securing and retaining all remnant bush land.

Gippsland's natural resources have been systematically exploited over the last century. As a long term resident of South Gippsland I have been a witness to poor forest management and the inevitable decline in biodiversity. Recent understanding of climate change reveals the act of removing the trees on this scale as a kind of madness.

The Strzelecki Ranges were effectively privatised in 1998 with the sale of the Victorian Plantations Corporation to Hancock Victorian Plantations. Included in the sale in the Strzelecki Ranges was a mixture of old growth forest, native forest and plantation.

Since the sale, forest campaigners led by the local community have fought to protect important forest areas. In 2006 the State Government agreed to protect key rainforest areas, however this deal was overturned by Government and the company in 2008, allowing for the clearfelling of 1500ha inside the Strzelecki 'Cores and Links' Rainforest Reserve. 80% of the timber coming from this Reserve ends up at the Nippon-owned Maryvale Pulp Mill. Maryvale has licences to take about 300,000 cubic metres of hardwood a year from the Strzelecki Ranges, plus a large volume of plantation pine. The Strzeleckis are also home to a range of unique species, including the only endemic koala population in Victoria.

Destruction of our forests to profit off shore interests is completely unacceptable and this situation needs to be addressed urgently for the good of all.

No Forest, No Rainfall.