Fact Sheet

WHEN IT MATTERS
Steve Bracks

Labor protects last significant old growth stands

17 November 2006

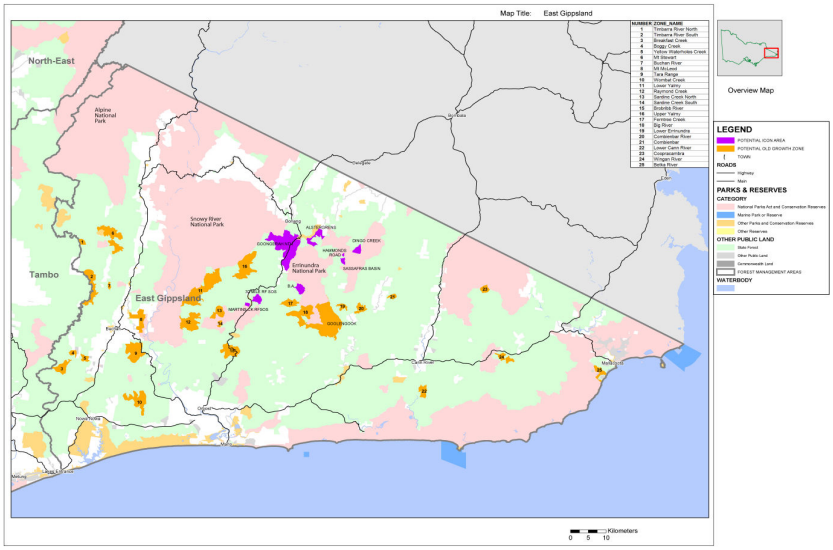
A re-elected Labor Government will immediately protect the remaining significant stands of old growth forest in Victoria, including the Goolengook Block, by adding them to the National Parks system. This will add another 33,500 hectares of State Forest currently available to the timber industry to the National Park system.

In 2002 the Bracks Labor Government placed a moratorium on logging in the Goolengook Block in East Gippsland pending the outcome of an investigation by the Victorian Environment and Assessment Council (VEAC). The Goolengook Block contains substantial areas of rainforest and old growth forest, long footed potoroo and other threatened species habitat. As the Goolengook Block can be permanently protected under the National Parks Act without any adverse impact on volumes available to the timber industry, a Labor Government will immediately wind up the VEAC investigation and protect the Goolengook Block in the National Parks system.

In addition to the Goolengook Block, a Labor Government will immediately protect remaining significant stands of old growth forest currently available for timber harvesting by including them in the National Parks and reserves system.

While over half a million hectares of old growth forest is already protected in reserves and National Parks in Victoria, it doesn't make sense from an environmental or commercial perspective to allow the few remaining large stands of old growth forests to be logged. In addition to their visual majesty, old growth forests are rich sources of biodiversity and habitat to a range of species.

The benefits for tourism, and market access opportunities for the timber industry from protecting the remaining significant old growth timber stands, clearly outweigh the on going minimal returns from the harvesting of old growth forest.



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