



Bendigo and District
Environment Council



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Community anger at woodchip threat in central Victoria

Regional community conservation groups are shocked by a move by the Brumby Government that allows forests around Daylesford, Bendigo, Castlemaine and Ballarat to be logged for woodchips.

An allocation order giving VicForests access to timber from central and western Victoria was quietly posted on the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) website in March without any public consultation.

The order grants VicForests – the discredited state-owned timber company – ownership of the region's timber for fifteen years, commencing in 2012, to make up for a shortfall in timber supplies due to recent bushfires in forests in eastern Victoria.

Stuart Fraser of the Bendigo and District Environment Group says "*Iconic forests such as the Wellsford near Bendigo, Wombat State Forest near Daylesford and Mount Cole State Forest could all be logged by VicForests*",

The region's forests are currently managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and only limited logging is allowed, mainly for firewood. VicForests supplies most of its timber to woodchipping companies.

'The Wombat Forest was recently identified as one of the highest conservation value areas in central Victoria that is not protected in a conservation reserve. We need to protect this high value forest not woodchip it' said Murray Ralph of Wombat Forestcare.

"Local groups fought for many years to have logging and woodchipping stopped in the Wombat Forest. The forest is just beginning to recover and along comes VicForests" he said.

Local conservation groups have called upon their local Members of Parliament to stand up for the region's threatened forests.

"Geoff Howard, Jacinta Allen, Joe Helper and others must move against this ludicrous plan for VicForests to log high conservation value forests in the region" said Stuart Fraser.