

HELP SAVE OUR RIVER RED GUMS



After an extensive three-year community consultation and investigation process, the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) presented its final report into River Red Gum Forests on 25 July 2008.

The final report contains some excellent recommendations for the expansion of existing national parks and the creation of new national parks in northern Victoria. In total, the VEAC

report recommends creating Five new and three expanded national parks, new regional parks and 29 new conservation reserves to protect threatened flora and fauna equal to 103,600 ha or 14.2 % of the original vegetation area

So it's now time for the Victorian Government to honour its 2006 election promise to "create new Red Gum National and Forest Parks if recommended by VEAC".

Creating new parks will provide permanent protection for our state's Red Gum forests and wetlands, so these precious nature areas will be preserved for future generations.

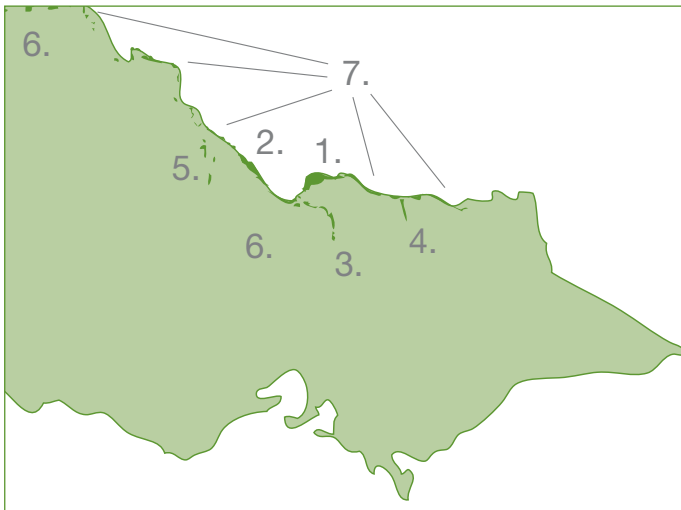
- 4) Warby Range – Ovens River National Park – increased protection for the most ecological intact river system the Murray Basin.
- 5) Leaghur-koorangie National Park – significant wetlands.
- 6) Significant Additions to Terrick Terrick National Park and Murray Sunset and Hattah-Kulkyne National Parks.
- 7) A new Murray River Park extending from Wodonga to Mildura, covering more than 1000 km of the river frontage.

In addition there are two new regional parks located near Kerang and Shepperton and 29 substantially new and 21 expanded or retained nature conservation reserves.

The proposals increase the area protected from 5.7% to 14.2 % of the original pre-European extent of native vegetation and close to nationally agreed targets of 15% of remnant vegetation.

Over 103,000 hectares of new Red Gum parks will be the most significant nature conservation outcome for the Murray region ever

Quick guide to VEAC's final report



Major New Parks Proposed :

Five new and three expanded national parks, new regional parks and 29 new conservation reserves to protect threatened flora and fauna.

- 1) Barmah National Park – the largest and most important River Red Gum Park and wetland in the world.
- 2) Gunbower National Park – extensive Black Box and River Redgum forests and wetlands.
- 3) Lower Goulburn River National Parks – a key river corridor and wildlife link.

VEAC's final report made some excellent recommendations, including:

- Stock grazing to cease immediately in most public land, including new parks, and phased out on water frontages.
- Establishing Aboriginal co-management for Barmah and Nyah-Vinifera forests and changing the National Parks Act to allow joint management based on hand back/lease back.
- Ceasing timber harvesting in new parks and highlighting that logging levels will need to be reduced by 29%, even without new parks.
- Maximize the maintenance of areas dependent on floods and providing appropriate amounts of water to maintain wetlands and flood dependent areas.



IT'S NOW OR NEVER FOR THE RED GUM

The long road to protection – Milestones in the Redgum Icons Project

It's been an arduous process, but the VNPA has been persistently campaigning for the protection of northern Victoria's River Red Gums forests and wetlands for more than a decade.

1990–1998: Various investigations and articles on Red Gum forests by VNPA.

1998: VNPA begins dedicated work on Red Gum forest issues.

2001: VNPA receives a grant to employ a part-time Barmah-Millewa campaigner.

2002: The Darnya Alliance is formed at a summit in the Barmah Forest.

2004: VNPA, together with the National Parks Association of NSW, launch the Red Gum Icons Project.

March 2005: The release of a tri-state report reveals that the number of dead or dying Red Gums in Victoria, NSW and South Australia had increased from 51% to 75%, between 2002 and 2004.

April 2005: The announcement of an expanded VEAC investigation into Red Gum forests and wetlands along the Victorian side of the Murray River.

August 2005: The Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment admits to a logging breach in a protected area of the Barmah Forest.

October 2006: VEAC releases River Red Gum Forests Investigation discussion paper and calls for submissions. Over 1,350 submissions received.

November 2006: During the state election, the Victorian Government announces support for new Red Gum parks if recommended by VEAC.

July 2007: VEAC releases draft proposals paper for public comment. Around 6,800 submissions received in response to the draft proposals.

October 2007: Premier Brumby announces that VEAC's environmental water recommendations will not be accepted by the government.

July 2008: Final VEAC Report released recommending creation of over 100,000 hectares of new parks.

So what needs to be done now?

The Victorian Government needs to fulfill its 2006 election promise and create a series of national parks in northern Victoria as soon as possible. The government must:

- Create over 100,000 hectares of new Red Gum national and state parks before the end of 2009.
- Ensure joint management, with traditional owners, of the Barmah National Park.
- Fund the management of new parks by providing an annual budget of at least \$3 million.
- Provide resources to promote tourism and to assist local communities and industries to adjust.
- Return water for environmental flows to ensure the health of the wetlands.

Five ways you can contribute – today

The VNPA's ten-year campaign to save the River Red Gum forests and wetlands of northern Victoria is now reaching an endgame. The Victorian Government will be making critical decisions over the coming months. Please get involved and support our campaign to protect these internationally significant forests and wetlands.

1) Make a donation to VNPA.

We need financial support as we continue to be the leading voice for the creation of these new parks in northern Victoria.

You can donate to our campaign by:

Mail: VNPA L3, 60 Leicester St, Carlton, 3053

Phone: 03 9347 5188

Online: www.vnpa.org.au

2) Send a message to the government.

Sign a VNPA postcard and send to the Premier. Information kits and e-postcards are available from VNPA and online at www.vnpa.org.au.

3) Become better informed.

Read the briefing fact sheets or final report from Victorian Environmental Assessment Council. These are available on line at www.veac.vic.gov.au

4) Spread the word.

Display this flyer in your car – or at your work. Talk to your neighbors, your local community organisation or your school.

5) Make your voice heard.

Contact your local politician and write letters to your local newspaper/s.

