



FORESTS OF THE CENTRAL WEST

PYRENEES FOREST (15,790 HECTARES)

WHERE

180 kilometres from Melbourne and 70 kilometres north-west of Ballarat in the popular wine region.

VALUES

This high conservation value forest is home to 240 species of native plants and over 100 bird, 15 mammals and 16 reptile species including legless lizards, bearded dragons and tree goannas. A range of threatened species have been recorded including powerful owls, brush-tail phascogales, diamond firetails and a significant old tree site. This mixed species forest also has extensive patches of mature eucalypts.

VNPA has assessed the area for being suitable for protection under the *National Parks Act 1975* (VNPA's 2010 report, *Better Protection for Special Places*)

THREATS

Threatened by logging operations, with 18 areas scheduled (including one which includes powerful owl records); gold mining/prospecting; poorly maintained and illegal tracks causing erosion; and stock grazing.

VEAC DRAFT PROPOSALS

Pyrenees forest is upgraded to a new Pyrenees National Park of 16,076 hectares, and a new Regional Park of 4,160 hectares.

KEY MESSAGES AND TALKING POINTS

- Strongly support the new Pyrenees National Park of 16,076 hectares, and a new Regional Park of 4,160 hectares.
- The Pyrenees gum only known distribution is from the eastern side of the Pyrenees State Forest.
- Box-ironbark forest on the northern side of the Pyrenees range provides habitat for species in the threatened Victorian temperate woodland birds community – including the painted honeyeater, black-chinned honeyeater, diamond firetail and brown treecreeper.
- The endangered swift parrot relies heavily on flowering box-ironbark forests in autumn and winter, and has been recorded at the Landsborough end of the park.
- New reserves would protect a significant area of underrepresented Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs), which help achieve global biodiversity targets.
- There should be a well-resourced ecological restoration plan created for the Pyrenees Forest to deal with the potential impacts of climate change.
- There should be the requirement for the regional park to have a management plan to manage allowable uses and avoid conflict.
- In the regional park, there should be a long-term strategy for domestic firewood collection.
- We support the Ben Major Nature Conservation Reserve (3,229 hectares) (adjacent to Mount Cole and Pyrenees), Waterloo Nature Conservation Reserve (1,695 hectares); and dozens of other new and expanded bushland reserves are also welcome.