



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for Environment and Climate Change

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LOGGING ENDS IN THE OTWAYS

The last logging operation in the Otways has closed, in keeping with a Victorian Government commitment to protect the area.

Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings said the logging licenses run out today, after the Government passed legislation in 2002 to end harvesting in the ranges.

“These native forests have been a source of timber for 150 years but will now be protected for their natural beauty, biodiversity, tourism and recreational opportunities,” Mr Jennings said.

“The Otway Ranges are also an important water catchment, where timber harvesting was previously factored-in to water management decisions.

“Geelong, Warrnambool and Otways residents have relied on the mountain streams to provide their communities with a reliable, clean water supply.

“We’re also acknowledging a strong community desire to preserve the Otway forests for future generations.

“This is a key biodiversity area with important plant and animal species and is noted for its stands of majestic Mountain Ash.

Some 160,000 hectares used to be subject to both sawlog and pulpwood logging operations.

Logging has been phased out in stages. The first step was establishing the Great Otway National Park and special protection zones under the Regional Forest Agreement.

The National Park was gazetted in 2005 and is the largest on Victoria’s coast. It came after the Government asked the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) investigate the creation of a single national park between Anglesea and Cape Otway.

“The Great Otway National Park gives the highest level of protection to the old-growth forest, waterfalls, scenic landscape, lush rainforest and tall trees that make the Otways so special,” Mr Jennings said.

The National Park is also home to threatened plant and animal species such as the Spot-tailed Quoll and the Angahook Pink-Fingers Orchid, which is only found in the Otways.

Since 2005 logging has continued in a separate reserve called the Otway Forest Park, which is subject to a stewardship agreement between the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and Parks Victoria.

Now that logging has ceased the Otway Forest Park will be managed by Parks Victoria.