

HAMILTON FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB



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To:

1 May 2009

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council

Level 6, 8 Nicholson St,
East Melbourne, Victoria 3002

Re. Remnant Native Vegetation Investigation

RED HILL, LITTLE YOUNGS and YOUNGS STATE FOREST

These listed by DSE as 'Special Protection Zone' except the eastern section which is listed as 'Special Management Zone'. The areas are shown in the attached file *RedHill LYoungs & YoungsSF zone map* (the 5 pink or yellow-coloured areas west and north of Lake Kanagulk).

These areas contain important Buloke and Brown (or Desert) Stringybark stands that are feeding habitat for the endangered sub-species of Red-tailed Black-cockatoo. HFNC has records of the RTBCs feeding in the area. Another endangered bird species, the Swift Parrot, is likely to visit these areas when the trees are flowering. HFNC has an extensive birdlist for Youngs Forest.

The reserves also contain remnants of a once wide representation of Eucalyptus woodlands of Yellow Gum, Yellow Box and Grey Box. As such, the areas concerned are an important biological reserve. HFNC has recorded *Antechinus flavipes* in Little Youngs Forest and it is probable that the Tuan is also present.

These remnant bushland areas are important as corridors between Jilpanger Flora & Fauna Reserve and areas to the south, including Fulham Streamside Reserve, the Black Range SP, Grampians NP, Glenelg and Wannon Rivers.

The attached map *RedHill LYoungs & Youngs EVCs* indicates the vegetation types for the areas mainly Heathy Woodlands, Lower Slopes of Hills woodlands and Dry Forests. Map *RedHills LYoungs & Youngs Bioregconsstatus* indicates that extensive areas of EVCs are considered "vulnerable", "depleted" or "endangered".

HFNC submits that all of these areas should be declared **Flora and Fauna Reserves** – nominated as Red Hills Fauna and Flora Reserve, Youngs Fauna & Flora Reserve and an appropriate name for the western block Flora and Fauna Reserve. The Youngs reserve would include the area marked on the map as Toolondo State Forest (the name in common usage for this area is, we believe, Youngs). It would also include the eastern edge of this area, what is marked now as Special Management Zone. We do not believe that the area should be divided in this fashion, the ecological imperative being far stronger than the presently unproven demand for firewood (which seems to be the reason for DSE giving it SMZ standing rather than SPZ status). There simply are not enough reserves devoted to conservation of species to allow further fragmentation.

HFNC does not believe that there is any long-term protection or special management provided to areas presently denoted by DSE as SPZ or SMZ. All areas currently denoted in those terms should be designated as **Flora and Fauna Reserves**, where there is greater certainty of long-term stability of landuse and management.

Yours faithfully

Dr PR Bird
Secretary,
Hamilton Field Naturalists Club