



FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON A NOMINATION FOR LISTING

Warm Temperate Rainforest (Coastal East Gippsland) Community

Date of receipt of the nomination: 24 April 1995  
Date of preliminary recommendation: 16 May 1995  
Date of final recommendation: 1 February 1996

File No.:95/0948

Validity:

The nomination is for a valid item and the prescribed information was provided. The nominated community is accepted by the SAC as a valid community because it is adequately defined and described according to accepted practice, and it is described in such a way as to be distinguished from all other communities.

The Warm Temperate Rainforest (Coastal East Gippsland) Community is relatively simple structurally when compared with most other warm temperate rainforest communities in East Gippsland. The community is floristically depauperate averaging only 32 species per quadrat, with few species of ground ferns and usually no epiphytic ferns, vascular epiphytes or tree-ferns. This composition indicates that the climate is relatively dry for warm temperate rainforest. The dryness of its habitat is also indicated by the common ferns in this rainforest type. The drought tolerant species Sickie Fern *Pellaea falcata*, Necklace Fern *Asplenium flabellifolium*, Tender Brake *Pteris tremula*, Common Rasp Fern *Doodia asperea* ssp. *australis* and Bracken *Pteridium esculentum* are also common species of the adjacent sclerophyll forests. The coastal floristic elements in this community are represented by the trees Coast Banksia *Banksia integrifolia* var. *integrifolia* (the only Banksia known from Victorian rainforest) and Boobialla *Myoporum insulare*, the scramblers Seaberry Saltbush *Rhagodia candolleana* and Bower Spinach *Tetragonia implexicoma*, the herb New Zealand Spinach *T. tetragonioides*, and the shrub Sticky Daisy-bush *Olearia viscosa*.

The community is species-rich in some life form categories and these can dominate some strata; the canopy can have up to seven species, lianes up to fourteen species and herbs up to eleven species. The canopy of any given stand may have the following species represented: Yellow-wood *Acronychia oblongifolia* (usual), Lilly Pilly *Acmena smithii* (usual), Blackwood *Acacia melanoxylon* (usual emergent), Sweet Pittosporum *Pittosporum undulatum* (usual), Blue Olive-berry *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* (occasional), Muttonwood *Rapanea howittiana* (uncommon) and Boobialla *Myoporum insulare* (uncommon). It is the only Victorian rainforest community in which the coastal species Boobialla and the biogeographically disjunct species Yellow-wood are consistently represented and where Coast Banksia can be quite common in some stands.

The lianes Staff Climber *Celastrus australis*, White Milk Vine *Marsdenia rostrata* and Wonga Vine *Pandorea pandorana* are the most evident at the canopy level with the wiry climbers Shepherd's Delight *Geitonoplesium cymosum*, Wombat Berry *Eustrephus latifolius* and Austral Sarsparilla *Smilax australis* more conspicuous in the understorey. Two herbaceous climbers are also found in this community; Bearded Tylophora *Tylophora barbata* is characteristic of this rainforest type and Austral Star Cucumber *Sicyos australis* although rare today is thought to once have been common in this community. The common herbs are Kidney Weed *Dichondra repens*, Forest Nettle *Urtica incisa* and White Elderberry *Sambucus gaudichaudiana*. Shrubs are a conspicuous feature of these stands often as a result of rainforest gaps that have arisen from the incursion of fire, landslips or the windthrow of overstorey eucalypts or rainforest canopy trees.

The edaphically and climatically dry habitat of the community, along with the lack of epiphytes and dominance of drought tolerant ferns would seem to indicate that this community represents a floristic and structural intermediate between warm temperate rainforest and dry rainforest in Victoria. There is a range of species across several life form categories which are common to both rainforest types but are either structurally subordinate or uncommon in other rainforest communities. In particularly dry sites associated with Warm Temperate Rainforest (Coastal East Gippsland) Community, Dry Rainforest (Limestone) occasionally develops (additional expert opinion).

## Eligibility for listing as a community under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee

The nominated item satisfies at least one criterion of the set of criteria prepared and maintained under Section 11 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, and stated in Schedule 1 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Regulations 1991*.

### **Evidence that criteria are satisfied:**

**Criterion 2.1** *The community is in a demonstrable state of decline which is likely to result in extinction.*

#### *Evidence:*

The area and distribution of the community has been severely depleted since European settlement as a result of land clearing for agriculture and grazing. Without active management and revegetation, remnants of the community continue to decline in area and integrity as the result of ongoing weed invasion.

**Criterion 2.2** *The community is significantly prone to future threats which are likely to result in extinction.*

#### *Evidence:*

The community is threatened by weed invasion which in part arises from exposure to wind disturbance due to the loss of ecotones surrounding the remaining stands, and in part from the proximity to urban development. Urban development and associated engineering earthworks provide a threat from landslip on unstable landforms particularly to those remnants on cliff habitats or those with habitats on steep slopes.

As with many rainforest communities throughout Victoria, the Warm Temperate Rainforest (Coastal East Gippsland) Community is threatened by fires of high intensity and frequency.

### **Background Information**

- There are seven taxa considered threatened in Victoria which have been recorded within the community (CNR 1994):
  - *Livistona australis* Cabbage Fan-palm (vulnerable)
  - *Marsdenia flavescens* Yellow Milk-vine (rare)
  - *Olearia viscosa* Sticky Daisy-bush (rare)
  - *Ozothamnus argophyllus* Spicy Everlasting (rare)
  - *Ripogonum album* White Supplejack (rare)
  - *Sambucus australasica* Yellow Elderberry (vulnerable). Listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.
  - *Sicyos australis* Star Cucumber (vulnerable)

### **Advertisement for public comment**

In accordance with the requirements of Section 14 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the preliminary recommendation was advertised for a period of at least 30 days.

The preliminary recommendation was advertised in:

- “The Age” - on 22 November 1995
- “The Weekly Times” - on 22 November 1995
- “The Bairnsdale Advertiser” - on 20 November 1995
- “The Lakes Post” - on 22 November 1995
- “The Snowy River Mail” - on 22 November 1995
- The Government Gazette* - on 23 November 1995

Submissions closed on 29 December 1995.

### **Further evidence provided:**

No public comments were received by the Scientific Advisory Committee.

No evidence was provided to warrant a review of the Scientific Advisory Committee's preliminary recommendation that the community is eligible for listing.

### **Documentation**

The published information and research data provided to the SAC have been assessed. To the best of their knowledge, the SAC believes that the data presented are not the subject of scientific dispute and the inferences drawn are reasonable and well supported.

**Final Recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee**

The Scientific Advisory Committee concludes that on the evidence available the nominated item is eligible for listing in accordance with Section 11(1) of the Act because primary criteria 2.1 and 2.2 are satisfied.

The Scientific Advisory Committee recommends that the nominated item be supported for listing on Schedule 2 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

**Selected references:**

Cameron, D. (1992) A portrait of Victoria's rainforests: Distribution, diversity and definition. In: Gell, P & Mercer, C. (ed.) *Victoria's rainforests: Perspectives on definition, classification and management*. Department of Geography and Environmental Science. Monash Publication in Geography No. 41.

McMahon, A. R. G. (1987) *The effects of the 1982-3 bushfires on sites of significance*. Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands Environmental Studies Publication Series No. 41.

Peel, B. & Coram, J. (1993) *Rainforest of the Lower Snowy River*. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Orbost.

Smith, C. (1992) Rainforests and fire. *Park Watch*. Victorian National Parks Association. March 1992.

**Endorsement by the Convenor of the Scientific Advisory Committee**

**Date**

12 March 1996



**Dr. Malcolm Calder**  
Convenor