

Koala Facts

The stronghold of the original koala gene pool in Victoria and South Australia is the Strzelecki Ranges. The Strzelecki Ranges are home to the only relic population of Koala in Victoria and South Australia.

All other koala populations in Victoria are the result of translocations from four South Gippsland Koalas sent to French Island in the late nineteenth century.

Translocated koala communities suffer from inbreeding through weakened genetic inheritance. Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus Regnans*) is a known food tree for the Strzelecki Koala.

HVP are currently logging Mountain Ash and replanting it with Shining Gum, a non food tree for the Strzelecki Koala and not a local eucalypt species.

Over 2004/5 HVP cleared about 800 hectares of eucalypts in the Strzeleckis, almost all being koala habitat.

All of the Reserve is located on leased Crown land within the Maryvale Pulp Mill Supply Area under the 1996 Amcor Wood Pulp Agreement. Almost all of the logs cut from the Strzeleckis end up at the Maryvale mill (now owned by PaperlinX) which will convert these trees into Reflex Copy Paper.

Write to:

Daniel P. Christensen CEO Hancock Natural Resource Group & CEO
Hancock Victorian Plantations, 99 High Street, 26th Floor, Boston, MA
02110-2320 email: dchristensen@hnrgr.com

For Further information on the Cores and Links contact Anne Westwood
Trust for Nature on behalf of the Strzelecki Forest Community Group at:
03 5678 8925 or 0417 328 292. annew@tfn.org.au



Victoria's Hidden Treasure

Strzelecki Cores and Links Rainforest Reserve

The Strzelecki Bioregion is the most depleted bioregion in the State of Victoria. Broad scale clearing for agriculture, settlement and industry has resulted in an 86% loss of Pre-European vegetation cover.

Only 2% is protected in reserved areas – the smallest reserved area of a bioregion in Victoria.

Much of the remaining habitat is in a fragmented condition. The proposed reserve for the Cores and Links is intended to rectify this situation.

The region has over 200 plant and 107 animal species, many of which are classified as being rare and threatened.



Strzelecki Koala facing extinction?

Development of a Memorandum of Understanding

In October 2004, Hancock Victorian Plantations (HVP), the Nature Conservancy and Trust for Nature, committed to an historic MoU, with the aim of creating a new reserve in the Strzelecki Ranges, located in an area between the National Estate forests of Gunyah Gunyah to just past Tarra Bulga National Park, a distance of approximately 25km.

The new reserve would;

*cover an area of approximately 9000 hectares

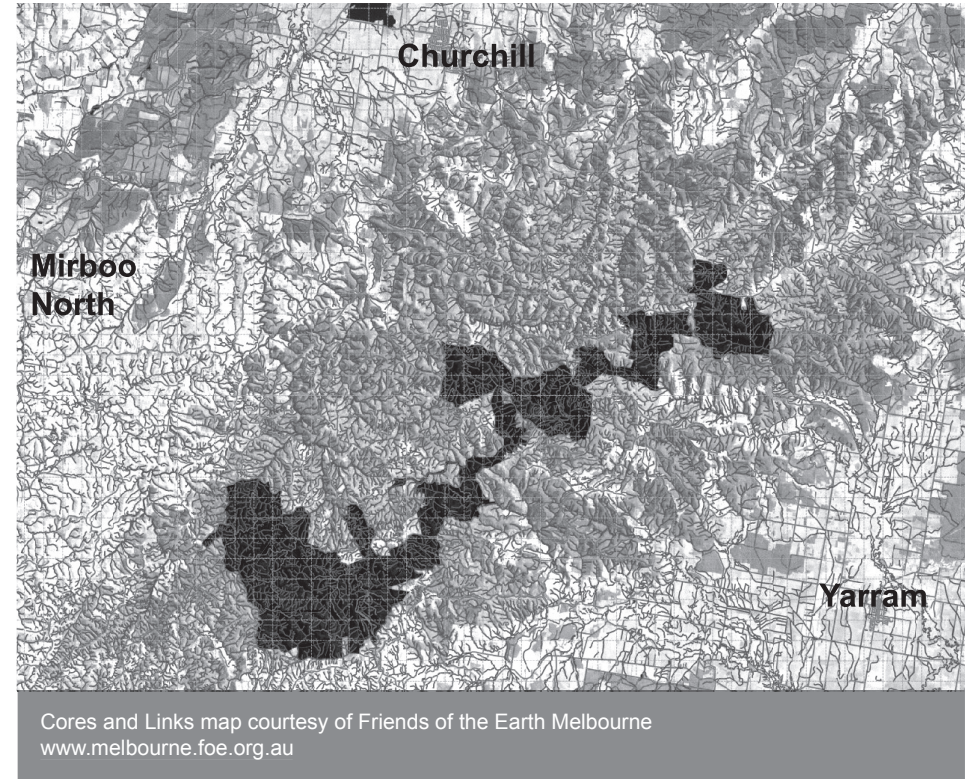
*Include the cool temperate rainforests and headwater forests of the Agnes River, Franklin River, Albert River, Little Albert River, College Creek, Jack River, South Middle Creek, Tarra River and Merrimans Creek.

Eleventh hour consultations between HVP, the Nature Conservancy and Trust for Nature have stalled with the possibility that some committed parties may step away from the process. The Strzelecki Forest Community Group has for five years worked tirelessly in progressing the Cores and Links Reserve.

We are asking you to post this leaflet to Dan Christensen (CEO Hancock Victorian Plantations) asking him to respect the original vision of the reserve and not step back from the commitment of the MOU.



The big tree near Gunyah Gunyah in the Franklin River catchment reputedly Australia's largest tree by girth at over 20 metres.



Proposed Reserve

The proposed reserve contains cool temperate rainforest that have a direct link back to the ancient forests of Gondwanaland. These forests have survived for 60 million years!

Flora and Fauna species in this forest include;

Powerful Owl, Strzelecki Koala, Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish, Tiger Quoll, Greater Gliders, Yellow Bellied Gliders, Mountain Bobuck, Sooty Owl, Slender Tree Ferns, Skirted Tree Ferns, rare rainforest ferns and several as yet undescribed species of invertebrates.

During the 1960's through to the 1980's, Victorian State Forest Commission and Australian Paper Manufacturers replanted thousands of hectares of forest in the Strzeleckis, including approximately 2500 hectares of Eucalypt Regnans forest which now forms part of the proposed 9000 hectare reserve.