

**Subject:** Red Gum Forests

To the NRC

The protection of the Red Gum Forests is critical to conserve their well recognised environmental values including large areas that are listed as internationally significant under the Ramsar Convention.

These are the largest remaining Red Gum forests on earth & they play a vital role in protecting the health of the Murray River. They are home to many endangered animals and are an important breeding site for migratory birds as well as being a major Australian cultural & recreational icon. Water stress has led to up to 75% of trees becoming stressed, diseased or dying. Consequently they must be recognised as vulnerable vegetation & their protection must be commenced now.

Nationally recognised criteria require 60% of remaining vegetation in vulnerable vegetation communities be protected - therefore it is imperative that new National Parks across the entire River Red Gum State Forest estate are created immediately.

I urge you to make new National Parks the central recommendation from your assessment of the forests.

Economic modelling & the Victorian experience has already demonstrated this will be the best possible outcome for the regional economy and could create many more jobs than are currently supported by the timber industry.

We need urgent action now. Please hear our voices & recommend that new National Parks are created to ensure their survival for future generations to marvel & enjoy.

Yours Sincerely,  
Ms Caroline Williams