

# Southern Ark project

Benefiting the biodiversity of East Gippsland through fox control

## FACT SHEET

### Tourism and Biodiversity

Southern Ark is a new conservation initiative aimed at facilitating the recovery of native animals and improving the stewardship of public land in East Gippsland through an integrated, large-scale and ongoing fox control program.



- East Gippsland is highly valued by tourists because of its vast expanses of wilderness and virtually pristine ecosystems. Vegetation communities vary from temperate rainforest to open eucalypt forests and coastal heathlands.
- Nature-based tourism is a strong drawcard for East Gippsland. Visitors enjoy activities such as sightseeing, bushwalking, fishing, canoeing and spotting native wildlife. Southern Ark will lead to the establishment of East Gippsland as the largest area in south-eastern Australia where native animals can reach natural population levels. This has significant tourism potential with the growing desire among both domestic and international tourists to experience native animals in their natural habitat.
- The Southern Ark project is focussed on preserving the natural splendour of Far East Gippsland. Public land areas including the Cape Conran Coastal Park; Waygara, Murrungower and Drummer State Forests; and the Alfred, Croajingolong, Errinundra, Lind and Snowy River National Parks will all benefit from this project.
- Native mammals play an important role in the forest ecosystem and the broad-scale control of foxes across the forested and coastal areas of East Gippsland could lead to one of the most significant improvements in biodiversity ever achieved in Victoria.
- Predation by foxes has been identified as a key threat for many native species. Species such as the Long-footed Potoroo, Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby, Diamond Python, Hooded Plover and Little Tern will all benefit from large-scale, on-going fox control.
- Already, as a result of the Project Deliverance fox control program, bandicoots are now being seen in the Cape Conran camp ground and visitors are excited to be able to get up close to the native wildlife.
- Tourism in East Gippsland will benefit from healthier ecosystems, with native wildlife and natural processes reinstated as a result of reduced fox numbers. Natural landscapes are becoming rarer worldwide, and visitors are expected to continue coming from far and wide to experience the splendour of East Gippsland.

More information about the Southern Ark project is available at [www.dse.vic.gov.au/southernark](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/southernark) or by calling the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Customer Service Centre on 136 186.