

# Democrats set for conservation vote

**CONSERVATION voters at the Nunawading Province election on August 17 will be encouraged to support the Australian Democrats.**

The Australian Conservation Foundation and the Wilderness Society's spokesman, Mr Roger Smith, said yesterday that the conservation lobby had decided to support the Democrats.

A formal announcement will be made today at 11 a.m. at the Yarran Deran reserve, Ashburton Drive, Mitcham, by the groups.

The decision could have a huge bearing on the outcome of the

**By DAVID HENRY**

election because the conservationists are suggesting that Democrats' preferences be directed to the ALP.

And recent policy statements by the ACF indicate that conservation issues could account for a "green" factor as high as five per cent of the total vote.

Mr Smith said that the Democrats had consistently challenged the major parties on environmental issues.

"They have expanded the boundaries of what is considered politically possible," Mr Smith said.

"The environmental policies of the Australian Democrats are better than the Labor Party and far superior to the Liberal Party. The Liberals' present approach to environmental issues can only be described as a calamity."

Mr Smith said employment and conservation went hand-in-hand and a regional employment study of East Gippsland had been initiated by the conservation movement.

"The Government has promised to pursue that study," he said.

"We are urging voters of Nunawading Province to consider environmental issues together with

education, social services and job opportunities on August 17.

"Both Michael Nardella (AD candidate) and Bob Ives (ALP candidate) have shown interest in local environmental issues such as freeways, shopping complexes and Yarra River improvements."

Mr Smith said the ACF/Wilderness Society slogan was "make conservation count, vote 1 Nardella, 2 Ives."

Democrats' candidate for the Nunawading Province election, Mrs Janet Powell, said the party's executive had decided that support of the ALP with preferences should occur on August 17.

She said party members would be asked to ratify that decision tonight and that a formal announcement of where the party would direct its preferences would be made tomorrow.

ALP candidate for Nunawading, Mr Bob Ives, said yesterday he was disappointed that the conservation lobby had decided to endorse the Australian Democrats.

But he said he would be "grateful indeed" if votes from environmentalists flowed to him through Australian Democrats preferences.