

ACF move is 'no surprise'

SIR — The announcement that the Australian Conservation Foundation had decided to support the Democrats in the Nunawading Province election (Sun Easterly, 1-8 was predictable).

It comes after the failure of their attempts to pressure the Australian Labor Party to rush the alpine park legislation through the Parliament before the Nunawading election.

None of the major political parties has an anti-conservation policy. But unlike the utopian policy of the Democrats, the major political parties, who have the problems of governing the country, need to strike a balance between development and preservation of our resources in terms of the National Conservation Strategy which is a consensus document.

The Democrats can afford to oppose the use of sawlog residues, now wastefully burnt in the forests, the pulpwood exports to placate a small minority in their pursuit of political survival.

The major political parties have to find the export dollars to reduce the impact of the burgeoning deficit on the Australian economy and lifestyle, to ensure secure conditions of employment for the timber industry workers or to provide the extra jobs which the pulpwood exports could furnish.

The report of the Timber Industry Inquiry in Victoria recommends this development for consideration by the State Government pointing out that it has no significant additional environmental impact on our forests.

It is curious that a conservation lobby which claims a membership representative of all political parties can claim to influence a change in the political direction of its members.

The Australian Conservation Foundation includes amongst its members such groups as the Institute of Foresters of Australia who have recently expressed their disenchantment with the extreme policies of the representatives of the conservation movement.

A number of unions that the ACTU have also recently distanced themselves from these policies

and strongly supported the timber industry.

The conservation lobby claims to have been successful in achieving short term gains by some ephemeral political adventures. This is at least arguable in the case of the East Gippsland Coalition's efforts prior to the last State election in marginal eastern suburbs seats — two of the three candidates supported by the group were defeated.

In any event, it is becoming increasingly clear that these approaches could in the long term, be a disservice to the conservation ethic which the timber industry supports.

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SIR — The Liberal Party have been campaigning for the coming by-election with promises to extend the Eastern Freeway.

Prior to the Victorian Labor Government being elected, the Liberal Government studied the freeway issue in Ringwood for approximately eight years.

Cost is one important aspect of this project that has been overlooked. How much will the freeway cost and how will it be paid for?

In addition to the freeway, main roads throughout the suburbs of Box Hill, Doncaster, Mitcham, Warrandyte, Nunawading, Ringwood and Croydon will need to be upgraded to cope with the flow of traffic to and from the freeway.

Freeways do not clear traffic — they attract it. The city end of freeways are far from satisfactory, to stretch the freeway and generate additional patronage will only exaggerate the problem at the city end.

Public transport facilities should be provided for people in these areas. People with cars can still ride trains and buses, people without cars cannot use freeways.

Perhaps the attraction of a freeway promise is that people 18 and over not only have the right to vote but the right to obtain a driving licence.

People under 18 who still need to move around don't have a motor car and don't have a vote, but politicians should be warned, they do have a memory.

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