What are the environmental features of the landscape?

The Alpine and Greater Gippsland landscape contains an extremely diverse ecology across mountains, tablelands, foothills, river valleys and coastal plains, including the unique Gippsland Lakes waterways. This environment contains habitats for more than 250 species of threatened flora and 110 species of threatened fauna. Strategic bushfire management acknowledges the need to balance reducing bushfire risk to life and property and maintaining ecosystem resilience across the landscape. In some areas we modified our strategy to accommodate the needs of specific threatened plant and animal species.

How were the species prioritised?

We prioritised the environmental values according to: their conservation importance at state and national levels, their resilience to fire regimes and the ability to manage them at a landscape level DELWP and PV Biodiversity teams mapped areas of the landscape that contained:

- fire-sensitive ecological communities, such as Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Fens, Litoral Rainforests and Coastal Vine Thickets, which can have severe and long-term ecological effects from intense bushfires
- State (Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act) and Commonwealth (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act) threatened and vulnerable species
- habitats for 17 priority flora species, including Colquhoun Grevillea and Wellington Mintbush
- habitats for 26 priority fauna species, including the Lace Monitor, the Powerful Owl and the Spotted Quoll.

Fire is vital for resilience

Fire plays an essential role in the ecology of many native plants. DELWP currently uses Tolerable Fire Intervals (TFIs) to determine the effect of the strategy on ecosystem resilience. Alternative processes are being developed that will give more accurate measures. These include Geometric Mean of Abundance and Vegetation Growth Stage Structure.

For more information on how strategic bushfire management supports ecosystem resilience, request the factsheets from alpine.greatergippsland@delwp.vic.gov.au or by calling (03) 5152 0600.

What are Tolerable Fire Intervals?

Most Australian plants need fire for species regeneration. Tolerable Fire Intervals (TFIs) are the ideal interval between fires for vegetation communities or Ecological Fire Groups (EFGs).

- TFIs help determine the frequency, severity and intensity of planned burning so that it supports ecological sustainability.
- Burning below TFI risks species not setting seed and regenerating.
- Planned burning in Landscape Management Zones (LMZ) will complement the needs of high-value environmental areas, such as habitats of animals in small, isolated populations.
- In some Bushfire Moderation Zones (BMZ), we have extended planned burning from 8 to 10 years to accommodate the needs of some priority plant species.