



Amendment C107 - The Giant Gippsland Earthworm Overlay

Protecting the Giant Gippsland Earthworm is the goal of a new planning scheme amendment on public exhibition until Monday 23 November.

The Giant Gippsland Earthworm is a threatened species protected by State and Federal law. It is only found in an area of approximately 400 square kilometers between Loch, Korumburra and Warragul. The species is one of the world's largest earthworms measuring up to 1.8m long. They boost soil fertility and improve soil structure which helps drain our clay-type soils. Amendment C107 clearly identifies their existing habitat, mostly in wet areas on south-facing slopes. Knowing where they live makes planning new developments easier. Being able to adjust designs prior to beginning any works can potentially save time delays and money.

"Many landowners are unaware of the significant penalties that apply from Federal protection if Earthworms are harmed," said Paul Stampton, Planning Manager. "The Amendment introduces planning permit conditions for building and earthworks but this isn't about stopping development. Similar planning measures have operated in the Baw Baw Planning Scheme since 2012 and have proven beneficial by avoiding unplanned damage to habitat. It has also shown a reduction in time taken during the development approvals process.

"The Giant Gippsland Earthworm is endangered and is unique to our region," Mr Stampton continued. "Amendment C107 will ensure that giant earthworms are considered as part of the planning process. It is about helping raise awareness and protecting our threatened native species."

Some development will be exempted under the proposed amendment including farm buildings with an area less than 200 square metres and any development on lots 8,000square metres or less within a Residential, Township or Industrial zone.

From Wednesday 21 October information regarding Amendment C107 will be available to view:

- During office hours at South the Gippsland Shire Council office, 9 Smith Street, Leongatha
- On Council's website:
http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/news/article/21/documents_on_public_exhibition
- On the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning website:
www.delwp.vic.gov.au/publicinspection

Information sessions will be held at 15 minute intervals between 2.00pm and 6.00pm at;

- Poowong Uniting Church Rooms on Thursday 5 November
- Loch Masonic Lodge on Tuesday 10 November

Appointments are necessary and can be made by calling 5662 9368. Details can be found on Council's website, www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au

PR1725 19/10/2015