

Mrs GARBUTT (Greensborough) - It is with great pleasure that I support this important Bill and oppose the amendment moved by the honourable member for Gippsland East. The Bill will enshrine in legislation two principles that are crucial to conservation objectives: firstly, the preservation of the wilderness area and, secondly, the prohibition of mining in national parks.

The Bill goes further to create five new parks and it expands other existing parks, building on the impressive record of the government in protecting significant and representative ecosystems of Victoria.

The two latest Bills providing for national parks, the National Parks (Alpine National Park) Bill and this Bill, represent the most recent of many landmarks reached by the government in conservation and environment legislation. During the past seven years, the government has doubled the area of land protected in national parks. These new additions mean that 8.4 per cent of Victoria, or 2 million hectares are now included in national, State or wilderness parks. That is a remarkable achievement.

I point also to other landmarks such as the Tree Victoria Program, the ozone protection legislation, flora and fauna guarantee, the waste minimisation scheme for industry and the land care and salinity programs. This is a wide-ranging view of conservation and environment by the government, not just a narrow focus on protecting our most spectacular scenery, but a vision of our environment as an interlocking ecosystem in which each part has its place and every action has a reaction. Examination of the government's legislation reveals that it is taking action on many different fronts in the battle to protect our environment.

It is based on the proposition that development must be ecologically sustainable and that what we do in our environment must not destroy or alter forever the ability of our world to survive. The Labor government policy "A greenprint for our future" says it clearly. The greenprint "offers Victorians the opportunity for a satisfying and sustainable future for ourselves and our earth".

I am confident the people of Greensborough share my commitment to the ideals of conservation and environment. Indeed, this was the major issue of the recent by-election. However, conservation is only one of many ideals and principles held strongly by the people of Greensborough.

The Leader of the Opposition chose to trivialise those principles and ideals when he described Greensborough as "basically a retirement village for superannuated hippies, the new class of Labor supporters who voted Whitlam into power and never got over it". Apart from the fact that the Leader of the Opposition is closer to being superannuated, compulsorily, than most of the voters of Greensborough, he has scorned and rejected the principles valued by most of my electorate. It is no wonder that they did the same thing to him and his party at the by-election