

MODERNISATION OF VICTORIA'S REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENTS AND FOREST MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

TIMBER INDUSTRY

Participant summary notes - What are some key messages and insights from your discussion topics?

The views and opinions expressed in these summary notes are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any agency of the Victorian Government. This report was written by the members of the timber industry in attendance at the round table and captures the key points of discussion, as determined by the participants. It does not represent the views of the entire timber industry, nor does it comprehensively capture the full range of views and perspectives of those present. Participants from this workshop would like it noted that there was an underrepresentation of some timber industry participants at the round table, particularly native forest saw millers and forestry contracting businesses.

Tuesday, 9 October 2018

Organisations attended

Australian Bluegum Plantations
Australian Forest Contractors Association
Australian Forest Products Association
Allied Natural Wood Exports
Australian Paper
Hancock Victorian Plantations
Ironwood Wharf and Bridge Components
Midway Limited
PF Olsen
Victorian Association of Forest Industries

Other organisations invited

CFMEU
Fenning Timbers
Firewood Association of Australia
Heartwood Plantations
Jacob's Creek Contractors
OneFortyOne Plantations
Timber Communities Australia
Timber Merchants Australia

Government organisations present

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
VicForests

Discussion Topic No. 1 – Comprehensive engagement with Victorian communities about what they value in forests

<p>1. What does that mean to you?</p>	<p>2. What does it look like in practice?</p>
<p>1. Comprehensive engagement is impossible to achieve in 12 months. Also, comprehensive studies of habitats and species across the landscape is impossible in 12 months.</p>	<p>1. Currently there is an over-representation of values held by inner metro marginal seats often based on misinformation. As opposed to the views of the silent majority.</p>
<p>2. Appropriate recognition of the economic contribution to regional economies is critical. Policies that reflect the economic contribution to regional Victoria.</p>	<p>2. Educational perspective of forest history and understanding the durability of our forest.</p>
<p>3. What does success look like?</p>	
<p>1. Balanced informed approach - equal weight to social, environmental and economic values.</p>	
<p>2. Community is supportive of the forest industry.</p>	
<p>3. Public understanding of the plan.</p>	

Discussion Topic No. 2 – Redesign of what forest values information we collect, and how we collect that information

<p>1. What does that mean to you?</p>	<p>2. What does it look like in practice?</p>
<p>1. Whole of landscape integrated approach to values e.g. biodiversity; timber supply; water.</p>	<p>1. Remove local govt from regulation and approvals for commercial forestry.</p>
<p>2. Clarity and agreement about who collects information and determines relevance?</p>	<p>2. Parks, reserves, state forests and other land - landscape analysis.</p>
	<p>3. Clear and agreed process for how stakeholders input into data needs and evaluation and what happens to it/ how it is used.</p>
<p>3. What does success look like?</p>	
<p>1. Steam-lined and efficient integrated land management policy and regulatory framework.</p>	
<p>2. Whole of landscape approach to management of key issues (e.g. biodiversity and water).</p>	
<p>3. Correct weights assigned, reflecting weighted regional views, between economic, environment and social values.</p>	

Discussion Topic No. 3 – Simplification of the RFA Framework and forest management system, and increasing regulatory certainty

1. <i>What does that mean to you?</i>	2. <i>What does it look like in practice?</i>
1. The RFA framework and the forest management system are clearly separate elements.	1. Withstands changes of governments.
2. Look at simplified framework of other states, e.g. The NSW <i>Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999</i> .	2. No risk of other regulations overriding the RFA.
3. <i>What does success look like?</i>	
1. Industry can operate with certainty and make investments with confidence of supply volume, quality, price and term (20+ years) = job security.	
2. Greater security leads to greater investment and more value add processing and jobs.	
3. We understand why the existing RFA's are "ineffective" and learn from this.	
4. Remove local government from the process - their involvement is too complex.	

Discussion Topic No. 4 – Increasing the transparency and durability of forest management

1. What does that mean to you?	2. What does it look like in practice?
1. Transparency means improved data, timeliness consistency reliability. Clear policy framework which avoids sneaky deals.	1. Clarity of framework.
2. Durability= Not undermined by changes in govt policy or legislation. Stands up to legal challenge. Adaptable to market, science/Information changes in a predictable way.	2. Have input to transparent models.
	3. Public Education process beginning at schools.
3. What does success look like?	
1. Social license is achieved.	
2. Clear policy framework.	
3. Setting and reporting on clear social value priorities.	

Discussion Topic No. 5 – Improving the long-term sustainability and viability of forest-based industries, including the timber industry (over the short and long term)

1. <i>What does that mean to you?</i>	2. <i>What does it look like in practice?</i>
1. Resource security as an incentive to invest.	1. A focus on expanding resources in key regions.
2. Plantation expansion through new policy measures.	2. Optimising opportunities from current resources.
3. Government funding for a research centre to grow onshore processing.	
3. <i>What does success look like?</i>	
1. RFAs plus legislation not undermined by regulation.	
2. A long term plan that articulates a vision for all forest-based industries and forest management over all tenures.	

Anything Else?

In order for communities to make informed decisions on the suite of forest values, there is an educative / information piece required ahead of the themes analysis that explains and details the Victorian forest estate.

This should include explanations of what is forested crown land, and how it is currently structured and managed (state forest, national park, conservation reserve, special management zone, etc.). In addition, this educative piece should detail the chain of regulatory and operational responsibility, and the (limited) extent of commercial operations in state forests.