



# REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT JOINT ENGAGEMENT

SUMMARY REPORT: CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGION

Cloud  
Catcher

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# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report has been independently produced by Cloud Catcher.

In June 2019, as part of a broader program of engagement on Regional Forest Agreements, the Australian and Victorian governments ran a series of public consultation and engagement events - independently facilitated by Cloud Catcher. Following the events, we have produced six summary reports – one for each of the five Victorian RFA regions and one for Melbourne, where the engagements applied to all Victorian RFA regions. These reports offer a summary of the key themes and messages we heard along with a full set of the transcribed data gathered at the events. They have been produced soon after the engagement events took place, to assist with the transparency of this process.

Public consultation for this phase of engagement has now closed. For more information on the Regional Forest Agreement engagement process contact: [future.rfa@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:future.rfa@delwp.vic.gov.au) or see: <https://www2.delwp.vic.gov.au/futureforests>

For more on Cloud Catcher see: [www.cloudcatcher.org](http://www.cloudcatcher.org)

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of land and water. We pay respect to Elders past and present and recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Victorian Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life.

## CONTEXT

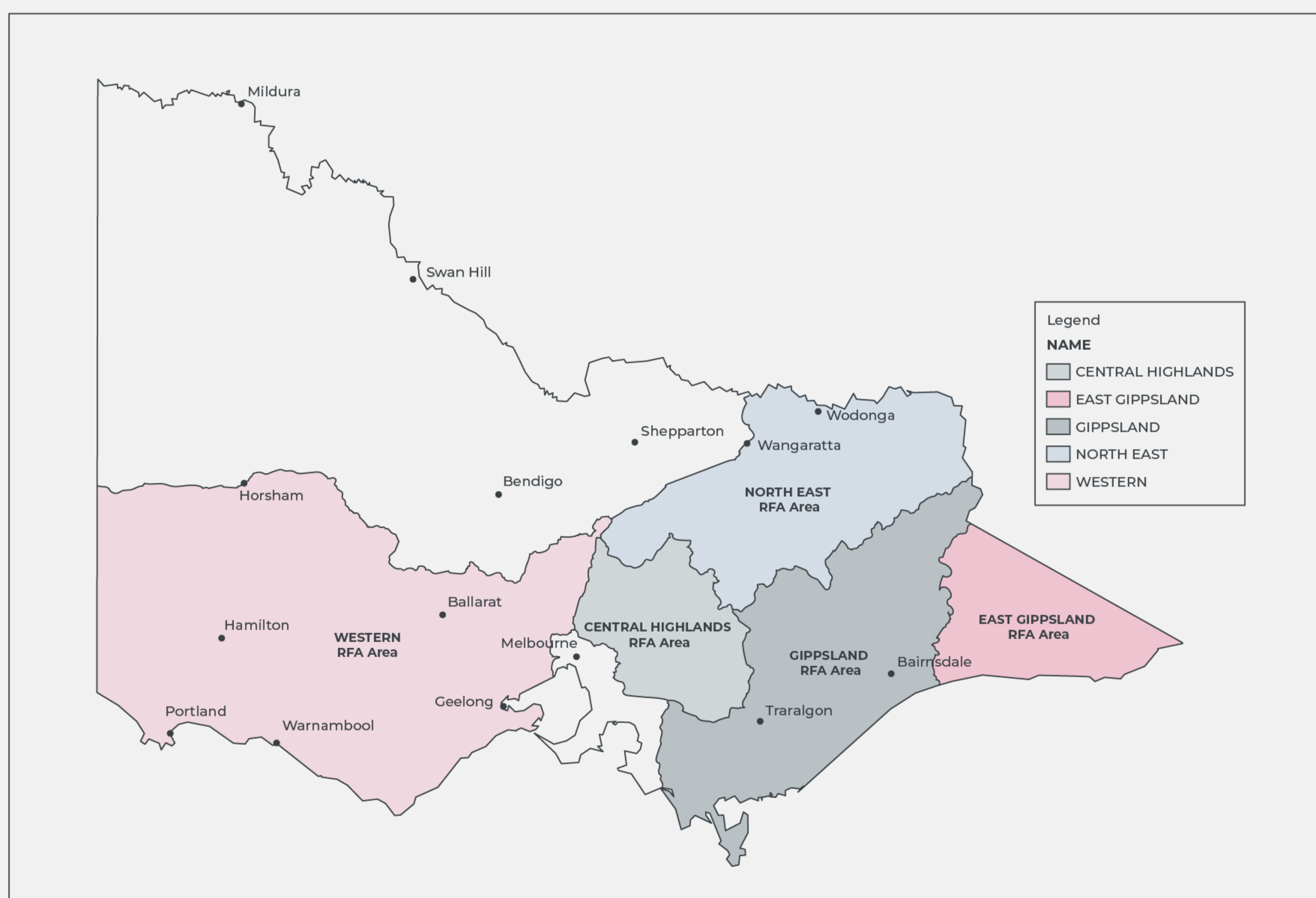
In instigating this engagement process on the Victorian Regional Forest Agreements, the Victorian and Australian governments have acknowledged the significant changes that have occurred since the RFAs were first signed 20 years ago, including the impacts of climate change, extreme weather events (including drought and bushfires), scientific and technological progress, advances in our understanding of forests and ecosystems, changing forest-based industries and opportunities, and the recognition of the rights of Victoria's Traditional Owners to partner in land management and seek economic and cultural opportunities.

In that context, the way we manage and make decisions about forests is of critical importance – for our natural environments, for our economies and for the future of our society more generally.

# BACKGROUND

## About the Victorian regional forest agreements

There are currently five Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) between the State of Victoria and the Commonwealth of Australia. In place until 31 March 2020, the RFAs stated aim is to establish a framework for the provision of a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) reserve system, ecologically sustainable management and use of forests, and the long-term stability of forests and forest industries within five Victorian RFA regions.



## About the joint Australian and Victorian government RFA engagement

The Victorian and Australian Governments agreed to work towards the modernisation and extension of the five Victorian RFAs before their expiry on 31 March 2020. This process is intended to reflect changes that have occurred in the 20 years since RFAs were first established. An Independent Consultation Paper produced by Dr William Jackson<sup>1</sup> provided an overview of the performance of the RFAs to date, identified key areas for improvement, and posed a series of overarching questions. Those questions formed the basis for public consultation and engagement with Victorian communities.

### The public consultation involved:

- A two-month online survey and public submission period via Engage Victoria
- A series of face-to-face engagement events - drop-in sessions, workshops and one-on-one meetings held across each of the five Victorian RFA Regions

The Victorian and Australian Government jointly undertook face-to-face engagement with Victorian stakeholders and communities in June 2019 to obtain feedback on potential improvements to the Victorian RFAs, to inform the modernisation process. This series of Summary Reports provides a summary of the feedback received during the face-to-face consultation and engagement events only. Feedback collected through all RFA consultation activities - including the online survey and public submissions along with findings from the contemporary assessments of forest values - will inform the modernisation of the RFAs.

1. <https://engage.vic.gov.au/future-of-our-forests/rfa-consultation-paper>

# OUR ROLE

Cloud Catcher provided independent facilitation for the face-to-face engagement events - community drop-in sessions, workshops and one-on-one meetings. Our role was to create a context wherein community members could have their questions answered and State and Commonwealth government representatives could listen deeply to their views.

We see our independence as important, particularly on a topic with significant community passion which involves two levels of government. To ensure community views are taken into account during government decision-making, we need opportunities for members of the public to have their say and to be heard.

# WHO WE ARE

## CLOUD CATCHER

### Facilitation for a fair & flourishing future

- We understand the power of great facilitation and meaningful moments for creating change. We have worked with people across all sectors and in many different contexts. This includes environmental groups and political organisations, local, state and Federal government agencies and a range of industries in the private sector.
- We acknowledge that the issues we face are intersectional and systemic. This stuff runs deep. And wide. It's not just the actions of 'bad people' that lead to bad outcomes; most people in bad systems will tend to make unhealthy choices. As far as possible, we aim our work at those systemic roots - in the way we work, the projects we accept and the relationships we cultivate.

Facilitators and report authors: Matt Wicking, Lina Patel, Tom Henderson

# OVERVIEW

The topic of forest management is complex and is deeply important to many and diverse communities across the state. After all, people's livelihoods and precious places, identities and hometowns, cultures and futures are all in the mix when we talk about forests and the way they are managed.

This is one of six Summary Reports produced independently by Cloud Catcher to present the key messages government representatives received as we travelled with them across Victoria. If you were to read all comments in all six reports, you would see some consistent themes coming through. One such theme was a notable sense of distrust in the process of decision-making around forest management. It was common for people to call for more accountability, reliability and transparency in the way the RFAs and Victoria's forests are managed. People wanted parties to the RFA to be held to what is agreed and repercussions if outcomes are not met. Many participants also called for more science-based decision making and for RFAs to be more adaptable, particularly in the face of growing issues such as climate change and fire, which pose new and significant large-scale threats to communities, natural places and livelihoods.

Input came from a diverse range of voices - community members and recreational forest users, tourism industry representatives, environmental groups, local government, water and catchment management authorities, timber industry, apiculture and other commercial forest users. Accordingly, ideas for improvement to the existing model were diverse. They included: moving away from clear-felling in native forests; supporting the transition to plantation timbers and alternative fibre; supporting other forest-based and adjacent industries and activities including apiculture, forest-based tourism and hunting to manage invasive animal populations - and much more. Across the state many environmental groups called for the cancellation of the Regional Forest Agreements altogether - or for very significant modifications. Similarly consistently, the strongest sentiment that came up from the timber industry, regardless of location, was a desire for greater stability and certainty.



To better understand how these and many other perspectives played out in this particular region, read on below. For other regions, see the relevant Summary Report. For more information, go to:  
<https://www2.delwp.vic.gov.au/futureforests>  
or contact: [future.rfa@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:future.rfa@delwp.vic.gov.au)

## OUR APPROACH

Our approach has been to take the transcribed session outputs – over 3,000 opinions and comments from community members and stakeholders – and to synthesise and summarise them to identify key topics under three main consultation themes. The main section of this report represents those topics in order of how common they were at events across this region. And Appendix B contains the raw data as it was shared by community members and stakeholders.

We make no recommendations here. We have attempted to reflect the main opinions and attitudes from each region as clearly and plainly as possible. In some cases, directly opposing views of reality were held by different groups in the same region. By including them here, we're reporting other people's opinions and their perspectives on their lived experience, not making a judgement as to whether people's ideas are accurate.

The events that this report is based on are only one part of a larger engagement process. Our understanding is that the same event outputs we have reviewed will be collated along with online submissions and survey responses as part of the broader synthesis to be used for decision-making and policy development purposes. We have no involvement with feedback collected via online survey and submissions through Engage Victoria and no influence over the way this or any other data is used.

# CENTRAL HIGHLANDS SUMMARY

# CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Below is a summary of the views and opinions gathered at events held in the central highlands RFA region.

Events were held across the Central Highlands in Healesville, Powelltown, Marysville and Alexandra and included drop-in sessions for the general public. A series of workshops were also held for invited representatives from ENGOs, timber industry, local government, water authorities and Catchment Management Authorities. For a full list of events by each region, along with attendee numbers, see Appendix A.

All sessions were framed around a set of three broad questions:

1. What changes have you seen in the region?
2. What should the Victorian RFAs aim to achieve over the next 20 years?
3. What are the potential improvements you think should be made?

This small selection of quotes from the Central Highlands region provides a sense of some of the ideas shared through this process. For the full list of community feedback for this region, see Appendix B.

- “There seems to be uncertainty for the timber industry which has affected businesses, communities and individuals.”
- “How well is the CAR reserve system fulfilling its function?”
- “Provide transition support for timber workers and families. For example, carbon, water, tourism and recreation.”
- “Majority of forest has access for tourism already. Tourists will visit if there is something of accessible importance. Ending forestry will not improve tourism, nor will it generate the same economic benefit.”
- “There is little evidence that Victoria's forests are being managed adaptively. A review is required to determine the levels which Victoria's forests are being managed in accordance with the principals of adaptive management.”

In each section below, topics that we heard in response to these questions are listed in order of their frequency. Those that appear first in each bullet list were most commonly captured on reporting templates at events. Those that appear later were less common.

## CHANGES IN THE REGION

Participants were asked to share what changes they have seen in their region in the 20 years since the previous RFAs were signed. For this region, some of the most common experiences shared were:

- Problematic logging practices including pockets of intensive, unsustainable logging with less time between harvesting.
- Industry improvements such as introduction of hardwood thinning to improve yields and improved workplace safety.
- The Code of Practice for Timber Production not being enforced and government not acting on issues of non-compliance.
- Increase in tourism and recreational use along with reduced forest access for recreational users.
- Industry and towns in decline due to mill closures, job losses, loss of local processing and industry uncertainty.
- Environmental groups are strongly influencing decisions in the area.
- Increasing amounts of land are being taken out of production and put into reserves. Reserves are not being properly managed.
- Logging is increasing fire risks in forests
- Poor post-fire recovery planning.
- Increasing biodiversity loss (particularly mentioned were the greater glider, Leadbeater's Possum, mountain ash and alpine ash)
- Native forestry industry is perceived to be losing its social licence to operate
- Decrease in water yields due to logging, climate change, fire and invasive plants and animals.
- Growing demand for Victorian timber products.
- Increased activism at coupes which has a flow-on effect to worksite risks for industry workers.

# IMPROVEMENTS TO BE MADE

Participants were asked a series of questions under three key themes to elicit their suggested improvements to the RFAs:

1. Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management
2. Long Term Stability of Forests and Forest Industries
3. Governance and Management of Victoria's Forests.

All participant responses for this region (Appendix B) are summarised below. These are not quotes but summarised lists of topics that arose, in order of their frequency. Those that appear first in each bullet list were most commonly captured on reporting templates at events. Those that appear later were less common.

## Theme 1: Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management

- Greater protection for biodiversity and threatened species. Expand the CAR reserve system to create more National Parks and protected areas. Stop native logging to retain carbon, water yield, ecosystem and biodiversity values.
- Don't renew RFAs. If they need to be renewed, remove the EPBC Act exemption.
- Factor climate change in at the forefront of decision-making due to its significant impact on forests and forest species, on fire and capacity for regeneration.
- For industry, provide a more strategic, landscape-scale approach to conservation.

## Theme 2: Long Term Stability of Forests & Forest Industries

- Support industry stability and certainty through guarantee of supply to allow for longer-term investment.
- Support the transition to plantation timbers and alternative fibre. This was seen to have multiple benefits including moving logging out of native forests and providing ancillary benefits such as carbon sequestration.

- Uphold the principle of 'no net loss'. Ensure log supply by providing access to alternative forest when Special Protection Zones (SPZs) are established due to species sightings. Introduce a mechanism which takes into account the economic impact of SPZs or other events which lead to lost harvest areas.
- Support the growth of alternative forest based industries such as tourism and recreation - partly through greater access for multiple uses. And support the timber industry to transition to new employment opportunities in alternative industries.
- Increase public education about the forestry industry to improve its social licence. Counter misinformation and misunderstanding about the contribution of the industry in Victoria and provide support for sustainable industry practices.
- Move away from clear-felling towards selective harvesting to better balance forest and timber industry needs.
- Support investment in local processing to retain skilled staff.
- Allow use of 'dangerous trees' in order to better meet supply. Also support fire-salvage logging to support continuation of harvest operations following bushfires.
- Review the Code of Practice that allows VicForests an exemption to national biodiversity laws to ensure that biodiversity outcomes are included.

### Theme 3: Governance & Management of Victoria's Forests

- Increase monitoring and regular reviews on the effectiveness of the RFAs. This would give the RFAs legitimacy and ensure they remain up to date.
- Increase transparency of compliance activities and decision making.
- Set up stronger accountability mechanisms. Parties to the RFA should be held to what is agreed in the RFA and there should be repercussions if outcomes are not met. People also wanted more enforcement undertaken by government over industry including VicForests and activities like firewood harvesting.
- Address bushfire risk through better planned burning, thinning, and more integrated fire management - with the community requesting better coordination between DELWP, industry and the CFA.
- Better incorporate science into decision making, including adaptability of RFAs based on the latest scientific evidence.

- Implement more active land management, including better management of the entire forest estate including reserves, to improve the health and condition of forests, to reduce hazards and to manage invasive plants and animals. Make management flexible and adaptable to new information and to the changing context over time.
- Acknowledge the role the timber industry plays in providing roads and infrastructure that support firefighting and fire management.

# APPENDICES



# APPENDIX A: ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

The community opinions represented in this report are taken from the session outputs at the following events throughout June 2019. The number of attendees in the table below is based on the number of people listed on each event's sign-in sheet.

WESTERN VICTORIA				
Date	Activity	Location	Stakeholders Invited	No. of Attendees
3 June	Workshop	Daylesford	Environmental NGOs (ENGOS)	6
3 June	Drop-in session	Beaufort	General public*	20
4 June	Drop-in session	Forrest	General public*	30
4 June	One on ones	Geelong	ENGOS, local government and timber industry	4
29 June	Drop-in session	Geelong	General public*	25
CENTRAL HIGHLANDS				
11 June	Drop-in Session	Healesville	General public*	13
11 June	Workshop	Healesville	ENGOS	9
12 June	Drop-in Session	Powelltown	General public*	18
12 June	Workshop	Powelltown	Timber industry	13
13 June	Drop-in Session	Marysville	General public*	5
13 June	Workshop	Marysville	Local Govt, Water Authorities and CMAs	4
13 June	Workshop	Marysville	ENGOS	2
14 June	Drop-in Session	Alexandra	General public*	27
14 June	Workshop	Alexandra	Timber industry and local government	6

NORTH EAST				
Date	Activity	Location	Stakeholders Invited	No. of Attendees
19 June	Workshop	Benalla	ENGOS and recreation user groups	6
19 June	Workshop	Benalla	Timber industry and other commercial forest users	11
19 June	Drop-in session	Benalla	General public*	7
20 June	Drop-in session	Corryong	General public*	5
20 June	Workshop	Corryong	ENGOS and recreation user groups	5
20 June	Workshop	Corryong	Timber industry and other commercial forest users	8
GIPPSLAND / EAST GIPPSLAND				
24 June	Drop-in Session	Orbost	General public*	9
24 June	Workshop	Orbost	ENGOS	1
24 June	Workshop	Orbost	Timber Industry	11
25 June	Drop-in session	Bairnsdale	General public*	10
25 June	Workshop	Heyfield	Timber Industry	21
26 June	Workshop	Traralgon	Local Govt, Water Authorities and CMAs	13
26 June	Workshop	Traralgon	ENGOS	4
MELBOURNE				
27 June	Workshop	Melbourne	Timber groups	11
27 June	Workshop	Melbourne	ENGOS	5
27 June	Workshop	Melbourne	Recreation and other commercial forest users	14
28 June	One on ones	Melbourne	ENGOS	4
28 June	One on ones	Melbourne	Timber groups	3

\* Community members, ENGOS, timber industry, recreation and commercial forest users.

# APPENDIX B: CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGION

Feedback collected through face-to-face engagement was transcribed by DELWP and is being published here in Appendix 2 for reference purposes. All quotes have been transcribed from handwritten notes taken at engagement events that were either directly noted by participants or written by government representatives on behalf of participants. Users should seek appropriate independent professional advice prior to relying on, or entering into any commitment based on material published here. Cloud Catcher does not guarantee, nor accept legal liability arising from or connected to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the comments.

## Q1. What changes have you seen in the RFA regions?

We are looking for long term sustainability of forests.
The intense logging of certain areas is a concern (might need to address via fire management zoning).
Too many coupes in sensitive areas.
Old growth logging a concern.
Impact of logging (foremost - clear-felling) compounded by fire, profound effect on species and botany (logging of green refugia post fires, increased species impact). Black Saturday; ignored advice to leave and regenerate.
Changes in forest cover have impacted water yield and quality.
There was a loss of species in areas near logging coupes (owls left due to logging).
Farmers are also acknowledging reduced water yields due to logging (strawberry producers).
There has been a reduction in the timber industry (jobs and mills).
There needs to be changes in management of forest practices, this used to be more hands on (e.g. staff were always given information and lectures about procedures).
No/less fire recovery.
Sustainable yield areas, less monitoring (currently only aerial monitoring, not on ground).
In the timber industry, contractors are struggling, sawmills closing down and a decrease in employment.
We need a change of management from Melbourne Water to National Park.
Now we are couriering logs over long distances, so less local processors being used.
The media are portraying no positive messages regarding forestry, about how the timber industry supports our community.
Aesthetics needs more patchworks of forests, logging of bigger trees and less time between harvesting.
There is more acrimony in the different sectors of community.
Changes need to be made in the department and governance.
The native forests harvesting ruins the biodiversity and destroys the forest.

Now we are couriering logs over long distances, so less local processors being used.
The media are portraying no positive messages regarding forestry, about how the timber industry supports our community.
There is a shortage of hand fallers
Less logging of coupes.
There seems to be uncertainty for the timber industry which has affected businesses, communities and individuals. The timber industry uses less of the available forest than before, and so much forest is in reserves and unavailable.
The forest is public and VicForests steal it.
Compliance with the Code of Conduct is not being enforced and the results turn the public against the timber industry.
The timber industry contributes to the forest fire management and community protection. The capacity is being eroded by reducing the size of the industry.
The reserves don't protect all values.
There have been changes in the community demographics, there has been less maintenance of forests and less timber industry.
There are more contractors out in the forests, no government officers.
No one is out doing enforcement.
More of society want to use the forest system but feel that they are denied access to areas either due to areas being changed from the National Park to State Forests.
Since moving to Toolangi in 1982, I have ridden horses throughout the Toolangi Forest. Beautiful forest and trails have been decimated by the clear-felling. Once a coupe is cleared the access is blocked by logs and soil, so there is no further enjoyment of that forest. The only tracks are the stony and rock roads, that you share with log truck and cars. So much has gone, it breaks my heart.
Increase of fires are a result of the logging practices, new growth burns quicker.
Significant impact on species, particularly on the greater glider.
The mills have largely shut down now with only a few small mills left - not for the building industry but for furniture and pulp.
Valuable timber being used for pulping.
The social licence for the native forestry timber industry has declined in local and the general community.

Retraumatization of an already traumatized community (after Black Saturday) - impacts of wellbeing and mental health.
The timber industry is no longer socially acceptable.
Plantation wood chips being exported overseas.
Climate change is increasing impact without improved management.
Decimation of mature forests and hundreds of species.
Logging is having a huge impact.
The remaining forest in Toolangi is becoming a tree farm. This has to stop.
There is a lack of transparency on how the government makes decisions around logging, forest management and water supply.
The five yearly reviews were delayed, or this didn't happen.
Forest and fire planning have been separated and seemingly out of sync with each other.
Climate change and decrease in water yields.
Percentage of mature trees has changed resulting in increased fire risk. The regrowth of forests will see an increase in fire risk due to less water being available.
The extinction crises with forestry practices exacerbating these issues.
Systematic conservation failure.
Monoculture is causing deforestation.
The Leadbeater's Possum are going from endangered to critically endangered.
The Greater Glider has gone from unlisted to vulnerable.
The Victorian Mountain Ash community is listed as endangered under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
The native forest timber industry has decreased in terms of employment and volumes, over the term of the RFA.
More forest workers are based outside of the region.
Sawmills, especially family sized businesses, are decreasing.
Changing societal views toward environmental sustainability.
Changes within the community, understanding and appreciation of the forest industry.
More city greenies trying to change the way we manage the bush.
There used to be a lot more forestry staff and now there are very little staff because the industry has reduced so much.
People love their wood, but they don't want to know where it comes from.
Government need to stop playing so much politics in this area, it never used to be this bad.
The timber industry is being targeted along with all other bush users use. There is a perception of damage by these activities.
More frequent timber release plans causes no commitment to the industry. It is difficult to commit staff and equipment.
The decrease in industry, means losing expertise, i.e. to assist with fire management.
A number of timber mills are closing down - affected by 1939 fires.
Difficulty sourcing timber for use, we should exhaust local market before exporting.
Destruction of environment, due to locking up land and this is not managed properly. Every forest needs different management.
More pest species, due to less forest management in National Parks.

Change from small forestry operations - 3 to 4 contractors, 25000 tonne coupes), to larger operations (with less staff) and bigger coupes. This leads to negative public perception.
Land that is 'locked up' in National Parks, are not managed, they are more at risk for bushfires.
Community divided about competing values, with tourism and the whole industry.
There has been a change in land tenure to national parks, this has been reduced access for recreation and livelihoods. For example, hunting, fishing and dog walking.
Timber mills have closed down, as it is harder to source logs for the mill.
Locking up forest and other land. For example, river frontage doesn't serve good conservation outcomes.
Active forest management has created a perfect habitat for Leadbeater's Possum, i.e. old growth with regenerating forest next to it, yet we now can't continue with this management.
Out of date data leading to poor outcomes.
Reduction of supply of mountain ash and change of species mix available to the mill due to Leadbeater's Possum.
Timber release plan short fall not being made up.
Mills effectively have one-year supply - until the end of June 2020, which doesn't enable them to access funding from banks to improve their mills and efficiency.
Different mills have been treated differently, especially given that one mill is part owned by the State Government.
Changes to economies of scale - now employ large companies that are logging larger coupes, forcing out more sustainable 'family based' small contractors that log smaller coupes. Smaller contractors are also more versatile, employ more people locally as less large-scale equipment is used.
A less balance conversation with public debate dominated by green groups, also the debate is not based on verified facts.
Decline in a number of mills.
Loss of jobs (directly and indirectly).
Towns in decline.
Increased sovereign risk from supply contracts that can't be met, with taxpayers footing the bill.
Increased recreational use.
Change in community attitudes to native forestry - against.
Enhance integrated fire management - CFA, DELWP and industry.
Introduction of hardwood thinning to improve yields.
That Leadbeater's possum like to live in regenerated forest areas.
Foresters, as in people who understand the whole forest system are less. Now specialists who need to all collaborate to get the 'full story' - expensive and loss of holistic forest understanding.
The mills have tried their best to improve with kilns.
More Special Protection Zones, less harvestable area each on every year.
The way timber release plans are implemented or planned has become so complex.
Logging should be 100 years - up to 10%. Are we running out of wood?
Substantial areas taken out of production and put into reserves. Areas of Upper Yarra now off limits.
Has not maintained integrity for industry.
Declining quality due to limited coupe availability as a result of site-specific measures for threatened species - lost logs.
Unmanaged locked up National Parks.

More intense fires that people can't get too when they happen.
Less sawmills still open.
Quality and size of logs have declined over the years.
Disruption to contractors and logging which means quality of logs reduces.
Less coupes to log - due to species being found.
More roads are blocked, access is harder.
Less timber available.
3-4 contractors have gone out of business in this area in the past few months.
There has been an increase of protest activity.
Contractors leaving industry due to economic and political constraints.
Victoria Government are not interested in helping timber industry. Not supportive of industry.
More demand for timber from society.
Anxiety over well managed and public proven industry.
Barriers to innovation prevent uptake of value adding.
Our current state of knowledge is inadequate to make the right decisions.
Increase tourism in this region.
Introduction of code of conduct.
Diverse use of forest increases leads to income opportunities.
Multi use of forests.
Example of how forest is managed by Murrindindi local council.
Tourism drivers, tree change new in Yarra Ranges Council.
Very few of moments of agency co-operation VicForests, DELWP and local council.
Conflict with new and old community in Yarra Ranges Council.
A lot of unrest. For example, direct action at work sites in Yarra Ranges Council. Disruption of legitimate work.
Economic development.
94 jobs (directly).
22% growth in manufacturing.
Furniture manufacturing has grown.
Sought after timber products.
Water catchment key drivers - Climate Change - Melbourne population growth - Invasive species example deer
Security of closed catchments compromised by increased illegal access.
High water demand and demand for recreation use of catchment areas.
Climate change underpins - Fire regime - Fires threaten water catchment - Fire management policies

Mills are shutting down.
Youth suffering at the sight and comprehension of 12m clear-felling.
People losing their jobs.
Unsustainable harvest and only four years of harvest left.
I don't think RFA's add any value.
VicForests are not applying code of forest practice precautionary principle.
Reserve system, biodiversity and Code of Practice are inadequate.
The Code of Forest doesn't account for understory impact. RFA's were only about exemptions from Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and export controls. Reviews don't hold anyone to account, compliance with Code of Forest Practice is an example.
Pockets of intensive unsustainable logging.
Incidents of non-compliance not acted upon or years to action. Limit of reviews of breaches continue to find no issues when there clearly are.
Change in harvesting. The forest management areas and tree type to only one area and two tree types are not ecological.
The botanical structure has been compromised.
Increased in invasive species (blackberries and deer) in forested land but not in catchments of National Park in Rubicon area.
Over logging in the area, need to ensure specific area management in taken into account.
Change in the use of timber, we no longer need hardwood for housing.
No long-term contracts for timber, all short-term contracts.
Forest system has changed to a juvenile system.
There are now too many restrictions on harvesting from new sightings of endangered species, which can cause whole harvesting coupes to become unviable.
Many problems are handed to the Local Government to deal with, such as conflict over road use, compliance on plantation operations.
Compliance with Action Statements under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act aren't being clearly adhered to, an effort in surveying and managing endangered species has declined - or at least isn't reported on clearly.
It appears not all wood is productively utilised with logs being left in coupes.
Losing biodiversity, indicator that it's not working.
Coupes a lot closer together, smaller buffers.
Increasing development, increase in fire risk to forests.
Unable to achieve appropriate balance of age classes.
Seemingly petty decisions to cut off forest access.
More harvesting than is sustainable.
Coupes are closer together. More obvious in the scenery.
Restrictions on timber availability.



Closing of forest areas for harvest and/or public access.
Closures of local mills forcing long haul transport of saw logs.
There is more weight behind the 'Green' groups view than the industry, in relation to Leadbeater's Possum.
Closures of businesses due to unsustainable future and lack of certainty of timber availability.
Closure of the Alexandra saw mill.
Reduction in logging crews, crews are now larger due to financial needs to meet production.
Less workers and it is hard to get experience.
There is a lack of certainty for timber workers. We are having to move coupes regularly, this is from timber release plan not being signed. Loss of production, effectively not for working for 12 weeks.
Tourism is very important to the local area for visitors wanting to fish.
Many timber workers come from outside the area, including log trucks. There is a risk to the visitors to the forest, where trucks and tourists are on the same road (Snobs Creek Road).
Logging has impacted turbidity of Snobs Creek and effected the Snobs Creek hatchery. Further harvesting in the Snobs Valley will impact the hatchery, less water flows in the river.
Fishing brings more money locally than the timber industry. More people employed at the hatchery than the local industry.
There is a strong focus of logging in the Central Highlands, as other areas have been logged.
Locally there is a very high percentage of logging of local forests.
Decrease in the number of sawmills. No mills to support the industry.
Change in management practices, we need to leave more seed plants in the forest areas.
Decrease in the quality of forest.
Decrease in logging coupes due to zoning systems.
Leadbeater's Possum have increased and there no need to allow for more land, focus on land size and roads for them to get across.
Continually less access due to protection of species.
Stock is taken out of shire and no economic benefit.
Reduction of sawmills impacted community.
Employment and businesses are down.
Costs to local councils to maintain roads despite money leaving councils.
Kids pathway to jobs lost - sawmill was a great first step out of school, no other opportunity, so they usually leave town.
Timber resource is declining.
Yields and quality of timber have gone down, is the yield being equally dispersed between remaining mills.
Rules and regulation for the environment, plants, animals and water are much better than they were.
It's all about meeting contracts.
Landscapes are totally wiped out.
Plantations are much worse for fauna impacts.
Regrowth regenerating quickly.
Rubicon - Mountain ash and alpine ash has been totally wiped out under timber release plan over 2 years.

Tourist businesses are being destroyed.
Tourism major industry.
Decrease in logging.
Reduced access to sapphire fossicking sites.
Harder to get to fossicking sites for metal detecting for prospectors and miners.
More restrictions and policed a lot heavier, creating more work for industry which means more hours.
Safer industry to work in, there is a lot less injuries.
Closing areas of forest by green movements, it is a questionable process and management which leads to false promise.
Sympathetic to green movement.
Forest dynamics and structure has changed.
The us versus them mentality consolidating more, and all sawmills have closed.
Job losses and declining towns.
Poor environmental outcomes due to inflexible regulation and no response from State Government about approving lower impact alternatives.
There is not enough planned burning. Too many endangered species loop holes.
After the fires, harvesting should have been reduced to a sustainable level to account for loss of wood resource.
Post-fire recovery is done poorly, with little salvage harvest of burnt wood - which affects sustainable yield of 'green wood'.
Delay in release of timber release plan affected the ability, to 'make quota' which affects viability of contractors.
Increased activism, negative media or influencing public.
Huge gap in the media and the public about wanting the product and not wanting forests cut down.
Less back burning.

## Q2. What should the Victorian RFAs aim to achieve over the next 20 years?

Do not renew RFA, Move to plantations, specifically in Toolangi.
We need to have a rapid transition to timber yards.
20,000 hectors in RFA - have old growth logged. It has been fire prone for over 30 years, according to the Wilderness Society.
Increase fire prone for 30 years after a coupe is logged.
What is the relationship between Victoria and Commonwealth governments?
How can RFAs capture issues like climate change, drought, fire risk and change in general?
We need to transition to plantations immediately.
Improve connectivity between reserves for species protection and ecosystem viability.
Interconnected continuous network of buffers and corridors.
Protecting specific features of the landscape and highly protected species, particularly in areas such as the Central Highlands National Park.
Leadbeater Possum Species Protection Zones (SPZs) are impacting the timber supply. I want to see a viable native forest timber industry for the future.
There needs to be a timber industry (open up National Parks). Less impact of timber harvesting, this has been too high.
We need jobs for sawmillers and workers.

Agree with expansion of the plantation industry. Look to support their expansion but we are a long way away. Would need significantly more support and investment in that industry. Pine doesn't replace native forest, need the native too.
Not be in our backyard - Forest practices in other countries are not as sustainable, as we have in Victoria. We need to think about the world and our global footprint.
Forests should be managed properly. A sustainable source of employment, it is sad to see the timber mills gone. Automation and pulp has killed off the 'value' adding cottage industries.
We need to stop native harvesting, we should be transitioning to plantations.
Reduce the bushfire risk posed by forests and avoid logging.
Need to transition into plantation for underutilised land.
We need to incorporate water yields.
The RFA have been biased towards timber harvesting and it should have stronger emphasis on flora and fauna (conservation values).
We need to stop regeneration burns in the atmosphere (carbon).
The forest is being a native 'protector' of climate change.
The role of carbon sinks.
By changing the forest structure, we are exacerbating climate change.
Improve public perception, including better and more transparent forest management.
We need little to no reliance on imports, we can't cut back on the timber industry.
We want more information about environmental benefits of wood and carbon sequestration.
The RFA's should be allowed to expire.
The community is passionate about maintaining the environment and want to also have a continued and sustainable timber industry.
We need to improve the viability of the timber industry for contractors and mills.
RFAs should be allowed to expire.
Transition the RFAs to end native forest logging and support alternative sources of fibre.
Regional communities don't always support RFA's or the forest industry, as it adversely affects other industries, such as farming and tourism.
We need to promote a positive role for the forest industry.
We need more multiuse of our forests, they need to be accessible to the other forest users, so they allow for a timber industry but improve the use of the forest for other people - post harvest. At the moment no one can use the forest after it has been harvested because the operations don't allow for use afterwards. There are heavy rocks on roads, tracks are destroyed, sedimentation and mess is left.
More environmental protection and compliance of operations.
There needs to be changes with how we harvest in the forests, we need to be more selective when harvesting, no more clear-felling.
Is there enough timber left to last another 20 years under the management of VicForests? Where are the controls? Who manages the managers? Rules are broken when boundaries are changed closer to creeks, bigger trees are split up to camouflage the right size. Trees that fill one truck have been seen leaving the forest. The contractors seem to make up their own laws.
We need to cease native forestry and move to plantations, transition the industry and the jobs.
Change behaviours through appropriate pricing of paper.
Locking up forests for carbon dollars, water yield, quality, ecosystem services and biodiversity benefits.
Reflect community needs to move to a greater environmental protection.
Retain carbon and water and increase tourism.

Genuinely achieve their objectives.
Transition to non-timber forest-based industries and transition of forest workers.
Introduce the Great Forest National Park.
A transition plan for jobs into plantations, alternative fibres, waste and resource recovery (community led innovative solutions).
Support local paper production (value adding and manufacturing).
Remove competition for plantations from native wood chips.
Address climate change and prioritise climate - linguistically incorporate measurable outcomes.
Address bush fire risk - reduce risk caused by timber harvesting.
The forests seen as a 'resource' paradigm shift is required by the Government.
Consideration of other values; carbon, water, threatened species and recreation, is currently not incorporated.
The role of forests in connecting people and social value is important.
Selective logging requires knowledge and science.
Consideration of transition to pine plantations.
Threatened species, an action statement on Greater Glider.
Equally weighting the social, economic and environmental outcomes.
Change to the way the coupes are harvested.
Transition to plantations, rather than native forests.
Consideration of impacts on understory.
Increase incorporation of science and evidence in decision making.
We need to appreciate, respect and enhance forest values other than timber.
How can the 1992 National Forest Policy Statement that underpins RFA's represent current ecological sustainable forest management?
Increase in biodiversity, decrease harvesting of the older trees.
The need to transition to plantations.
What is the basis for the social and economic future?
Robust scientific facts, evidence-based decision making. Adaptable to new information in the VicForests Management System.
Realistic value placed on trees including the ecosystem services they provide.
Support regional economies.
We need to retain carbon and water.
Genuinely achieve their objectives.
Transition to non-timber extraction industries.
Plantations and alternative fibres. Look to other community-led examples of transition.
Try to encourage domestic processing of currently exported plantation wood chips, this could replace native forest.
Prioritise the climate, even the national forest plans noted climate! Especially fire risk in regenerating forests.
Require measurable outcomes - what are the targets?

We need to have more certainty for the industry.
Ensure the code and RFA is clear, detailed and not confusing.
More education to the public so there is less confusion.
Actually, have reviews, every 5 years and not just say it.
Protestors shouldn't be allowed to enter the coupes. There needs to be stronger rules around protestors and enforcement.
Appreciate the industry. Have the commonwealth visit more regularly, to check on how the RFA is being applied.
Have the RFA accredit a good state management system not where we currently have, with special protection zones popping up everywhere.
Remain to keep all forest activities and uses. For example, hunting, fishing, camping, motorbikes, firewood collection, walking and the timber industry.
Stop harvesting inside National Parks.
Research into Leadbeater's Possum in National Parks.
Need more commitment for mills, as we won't be able to invest otherwise, and the current equipment is getting older, less efficient. Progress in the opportunity for renewable and biomass resource but no certainty means they can't invest in better equipment.
The community and the government need to back the industry by investing in smarter technology.
We need better forest management, for the future and our children.
Keep fuel reduction burning to manage bushfire threat to communities.
Lots of positives and information about forestry need to be promoted, including regeneration from harvesting.
Don't create a new national park - don't stop timber harvesting.
Listen to Bush Users Group United (BUGU).
There needs to be more flexibility, e.g. allow access to special protection zone, when you have to leave an active harvest coupe.
There should be maintenance of supply of timber to ensure skills are retained in the industry. We can't get smaller, as we lose skilled staff.
There needs to be long term planning and communication of this to our industry. They need to commit to the smaller mills, not just the larger mills.
Commonwealth should support: better collection of data to support the industry, potential markets, research and development, and converting that research to commercialise outcomes.
What are the alternative species to Mountain Ash? Where are they, how much and how could they be used?
Balance between sustainability of environment and forest industries. Don't need to be mutually exclusive.
Certainty for industry to facilitate investment and long-term stability in sector.
Flexible management planning which can be changed, updated when science or knowledge values change and better understood.
Take into consideration the greater regional economies and communities beyond logging. Recognise the importance for local communities beyond harvesting.
Recognition that a range of forest ages to be harvested - allow to take some older trees.
Holistic approach, big picture 'whole state thinking'.
Transition of native forest to plantations. Buy up old dairy farms. Farmers are really struggling and in highly productive land.
Transition jobs and local economic benefits to other forest-based industries (conservation, tourism - Powelltown is Melbourne's playground).
Provide transition support for timber workers and families. For example, carbon, water, tourism and recreation.
More jobs and economic benefits for Victoria.
Release more timber / area for mills - enable utilisation of 'dangerous trees' and fire breaks.
More active management of forests to promote water, carbon and big old trees outcomes.
Ensuring resourcing funding is continued for life of RFA.

RFA's should be supported and have a 'landscape' vision for the RFA life rather than being influenced or impacted by outside groups and Ministers making one off decisions.
Bigger recognition of silviculture and the role they have in managing landscape in line with RFA.
Recognise that forestry can improve water yield.
That our grandchildren understand that forestry provides benefits to sustainable landscape.
Have a landscape view of the entire system and ensure we are maximising the RFA outcomes.
The timber industry requires certainty and security.
There is a 20-year agreement with a 5-year review.
Want a long-term industry plan.
Plantations should be part of the solution but not the answer.
More security for industry, very hard to invest.
Timber industry is balanced and needs education on forestry industry. State government have a sawmill and therefore should promote the industry.
Government needs to look after the timber workers like they looked after other industry workers.
There needs to be an RFA mechanism to take into account of the economic impact of special protection zones or new information taking out harvestable areas.
Lasting social licence for industry - this has not been achieved.
Increase in certainty and security for industry, whether to invest or work in industry.
Commonwealth and State Governments work together to have a common database.
Climate change acknowledge that timber retains carbon.
Forestry certified by Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and responsible wood. This was not around 20 years ago (regulatory burden). There are processes to increase transparency that the RFA should / could recognise.
Opening up National Parks for logging and setting aside other components for environment assets - diversification.
Building and supporting forestry expertise to manage the resource, not just cut it.
Holistic approach to forestry and resource management.
Consistent selection of coupes and logging sites, more certainty around the process.
Less emotionally-based decision-making.
Better decision-making around sustainable logging.
Sensible zoning to support sustainable logging.
More reasonable balance of values and uses.
Protection of species, flora and fauna but not at the expense of sustainable logging.
Protect communities from bush fires if the timber workers aren't here who will respond?
What other jobs are available in Powelltown other than timber?
Let us cut fire salvage wood.
Support local jobs, not offshoring to China.
Greater certainty around access to timber on the approved timber release plan - protection from protestors, Special Protection Zones created for new Leadbeater's Possum detections.
Certainty of supply.

Certainty that we can get on and do our job.
Provide 100% certainty for future work to sustain supply.
Sufficient compensation.
More involvement by VicForests, use their knowledge and expertise.
Actually, need to make a final decision.
We need to avoid system collapse.
Use of surveys and on ground check for biodiversity and animals.
Use of current science.
Climate change is the back bone of sustainability. It should be a priority for the RFA framework to adapt to.
Aim to achieve the highest value use of forests, forest provide clean air and water.
Our needs include employment considerations for Central Highlands region.
Recognise dual occupancy of this place in the Central Highlands.
Taking a risk-based approach, backed by science in order to introduce management principles which mitigate risks.
More science to cut through rhetoric.
Achieve in doing a landscape assessment.
Exemption removed for Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.
New science taken into account.
There needs to be better clarity on what the RFA's are meant to achieve and better monitoring and reporting against these objectives.
Economic viability.
Should survey all coupes before harvest.
Ensure that forests keep producing product to cover cost of management.
Reduce fire risk to forests.
Expand to all values (socio-economic).
Joint Management with Traditional Owners of State Forests.
Boundary issues of Traditional Owners.
Whole of public land planning.
Improve 5 yearly reviews.
Improve Fire Management Plans.
Ongoing access to saw log supply.
Greater public access.
Track maintenance.
The forest needs to be managed with the latest facts, that is if there are survey results or the latest science we manage with that in mind.
Sustainable future, forest management for jobs and industry.
The Leadbeater's Possum needs to be reviewed as I don't believe that they are endangered.
Certainty for the timber industry, not constant change because of change of Liberal/Labour Governments.

Better forward planning of VicForests and DELWP to allow coupes to be harvested once it has been approved. To stop after the fact changes resulting in coupe movement - relating to possums.
More focus on plantation logging.
Native timber harvesting should be selective logging.
Will the RFA be able to account for sustainable industry for the next 20 years. We are struggling now.
Keep the industry working.
Cessation of logging to let forest recover.
Only allow logging a selective harvest if you have to.
Consider other values such as recreation.
Look to Tasmania for the diversification opportunities.
Try to support the transition of proud logging towns to ecosystem tourism.
Consideration of outdoor education.
Need to ensure ongoing communications with stakeholders, as they change over time and don't always know previous decisions.
Type of logging should be selective not clear felling - especially in water shed.
Stop everything in Snobs Creek.
Transition to plantation.
Increase of accountability.
Increase education - especially about regrowth.
Support industry to continue by enabling regrowth.
Better inform the public about the industry.
Certainty for industry and clarity of management without green movement misinformation.
Consistency throughout industry.
Robust forest management to ensure sustainability.
Long term stability for forest industry, to allow for significant investments in new equipment which is more efficient.
More planned burning.
Continued engagement of forests contractors - roading, firefighting, logging is needed to keep the community together.
Better monitoring for endangered species and other values across all tenure - not just in state forest where logging operations are about to take place.
Better assurance that modelled and yield data is ground-truthed to ensure that industry is actually cutting at truly sustainable yield.
Better accountability for decisions that affect contractors.
Security of land tenure, access to forest and flexibility to exchange areas to adapt to new information.
Balance social, environmental, economic values - not emphasis on one, just environmental.
Care about all - but need some certainty.
20-year vision - for timber industry.
Balance between industries. For example, tourism and timber. It should be weighted, by value (tourism may not bring funding) and should be equal priority.



Changes in moderation not in a way that decimates towns.

If there are losses, then we need to plan transition to plantation. Any transition to plantation be done once plantation is ready and suitable not before.

### Q3. What are the potential improvements you think should be made?

RFA's should move to transition contracts to manage increase risk of fire, climate change, carbon market, tourism.

Let the RFA's expire.

The economics don't stack up to support the native forest industry.

In Gippsland RFA region, all logging contractors - is the timber even there?

In Gippsland RFA region, the paper mill is not a good use of forest resources.

Maintain protection of threatened species.

RFA's should be allowed to expire - they haven't done their job.

End clear-felling to reduce impact on complex understory (very old 600+ years to 2000+ years old). Increase selective logging methods such as approaches used in Canada and using helicopters as we transition to plantation forestry.

Protect the water catchments, demonstrate water yield and quality increases.

Enhance ecological surveys, pre and post-harvest to better understand the impact.

Improved prescriptions within harvestable areas.

Creation of the Great Forests National Park to protect Leadbeater's Possum and forests, particularly under climate change. Need to transition to plantations across the state. Scale of commercial timber harvesting, more bespoke for example, personal firewood collections from silviculture operations.

More Traditional Owners input, involve Indigenous Rangers in management planning and delivery. Traditional ecological knowledge and support for Traditional Owner communities.

Future management to be better informed by peer reviewed research.

Removal of Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act exemption for the RFA's - timber shouldn't get special treatment.

We need to scale up plantations and this needs to be transitioned as quickly as possible.

Planting trees on farmland and store carbon.

We need to create the Great Forests National Park.

We need to stop logging of Great Alpine Areas such as Mountain Ash Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC).

Climate change concerns. How does climate change inform the RFA process? This was seen as important and should be a part of the negotiation.

How do we create economic development that promotes positive environmental outcomes?

The role of ecotourism needs to improve.

We need better education about forestry also including about Leadbeater's Possum (i.e. the possum is found in great numbers and should not be listed).

More transparent and better forest management, also compliance checking.

More timber processing in regional areas.

Positive messages about forestry and information about the industry.

There is a lack of comprehensive scientific data and examination.

More plantations rather than logging of native forest.

Remove exemption to the environment legislation.

More transparency about VicForests operations.
Increase in monitoring of what is happening on ground.
The Leadbeater's Possum is being found in great numbers and should be de-listed from the critically endangered.
Maintain flexibility in the RFAs to adapt to new information but improve certainty of access to timber resources to enable the sustainable forest industry to continue.
We need better dispersal of forest operation to minimise the visual impact.
We need better regulation of coupe burns.
Recognise the role of forests in mitigating climate change.
Remove the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act exemption from RFAs.
We need better monitoring and reporting of endangered species.
We need better roading and more weed management requirements enforced.
Better protection of biodiversity.
More multi-use of the land, more trails through coupes and more recreation after harvesting.
No more National Park.
No RFA without environment protection laws to protect creeks, large trees, and protecting species. However, I believe the forest should be for multiple use and access to all parties. Some forestry for tourism, horse riding, bike riding, four-wheeled driving, deer culling and weed protection.
Independent assessment of our forestry industry is not viable. Therefore, why are we pursuing this industry?
We need to bring back selective milling if native forestry was to continue.
Introduce repercussions for not achieving RFA outcomes.
If new species are listed under Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, Victoria's system needs to respond and ensure adequate protection.
Commitments to when things will be done. For example, if a new species is listed under Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, an action statement is produced within 3 months.
The role of water in the forest system.
Sub-catchment protection, this is not mapped. The 'cool temperate mixed forest and rainforest' Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act listed.
Flora and fauna impacts - objectives are not translated when you read RFA legislative objectives.
The Code of Practice needs to be reviewed.
There needs to be an agreement on 'what is sustainable'.
A review needs to be a review of wood chipping and its role in timber harvesting.
Economic viability of wood chipping into the future.
We need to have a better incorporation of science.
Transition to plantations, need to stop clear-felling and native timber logging.
No exemptions for loggers there needs to be more accountability.
Instead of clear-felling, this should be changed to selective logging.
Loss of understory to be avoided.
Recognition of other sources of use for forests, instead of low value return.
Protection of water yield and catchment (for Melbourne supply).

There needs to be accountability of air quality.
Incorporate repercussions if outcomes and requirements aren't met.
Remove the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act exemption!
We need to have more business security, clear rules that are easy to understand.
More education on forest management.
More compliance regarding protestors or trouble makers.
Better multi use so everyone continues to enjoy the forests for multiple uses. RFA's need to mention other compatible forest uses.
We should stay the same as current silviculture methods.
Renewable resource, continue with local resource - world best practices.
If sourced overseas, we have no control over forest management and is typically not to the same standard as Victoria.
Carbon storage is important to maintain and improve.
Ensuring there is adequate land available for harvesting.
More communication to the public about what is going on in the bush - forestry operations, false facts are circulated online.
Need better management of all forests, including the reserves, to protect the forests to reduce all hazards and stimulate new growth.
RFA's need to be long-term to provide certainty, security for resources and the environment.
Better monitoring of endangered species, such as Leadbeater's Possum in the national parks, not just in state forests.
Ensure log supply and conservation outcomes by enabling access to alternative forest when Leadbeater's Possum sightings prevent access.
Businesses need certainty to continue to invest.
RFA's need to be long term to give resource security and timber release plans need to be made in a timely manner.
RFA's need to be long term to enable continued investment by the forest industry in communities, businesses and continue employing people.
Accountability of legislation, i.e. whether practice reflects theory, if it is working and achieving what it was intended.
Reviews conducted more often than 5 years.
Legislation to be more proactive and take on the consideration the greater landscape. For example, Leadbeater's possum special protection zoning prescriptions.
Timber release plans to be released much more in advance to provide increase security.
Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative reserves have larger fuel loads, which equals to increase to fire risk opportunities for some harvest to reduce fuel load.
Utilise burnt forest - there is still resources that can be harvested.
Genuine sustainability, that we can harvest, and the forest can still thrive.
Empowered industry to have their say alongside the government.
Government working with the industry, not in isolation.
RFA's should be allowed to lapse / Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act exemption should cease immediately.
Increase jobs but not in native timber production.
Increased protection of old growth forest with hollows, and habitat for flora and fauna.
That the RFA's obligations and commitments provide equal to or greater protection for the environment and biodiversity that is afforded by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.
Loss of harvestable area needs to be replaced.

Species protection - move to strategic landscape habitat protections rather than site specific - 'pink dot 12m exclusions' that don't work for species.
Status of Leadbeater's possum needs to be revisited. Good news they are increasing.
Increased recreational opportunity in all National Parks. Yarra has no campsites.
More special management zone (SMZ) to balance coupe management zone (CMZ) and general management zone (GMZ).
Recognition of silviculture as way to manage fire impacts and reduce impacts of wildfire.
Increased support and education about forestry sector and the demonstrate the positives.
Important knowledge of land classification emphasised favouring forest land status over parks.
The application of the special protection zone is a blunt investment.
Timber release plan needs a longer term.
Five-year licences aren't long enough to allow investment.
Need to put the Special Protection Zone areas back not General Management Zone (GMZ) or give back the equivalent area to GMZ, so that there is not a deficit in harvestable area. Volume swap not area swap.
RFA needs a specific mechanism to do this area or volume swap. RFA just have motherhood statements not enough specifics. Difference between forest and forest industries which clouds the issue. This motherhood statement needs reviewing.
Long term security.
Better education.
Address issue regarding forest management zone.
Increase focus and transition on plantations.
Open up more forest to avoid having an intense concentrated impact on a smaller footprints.
Promotion of integrity of National Parks and all forests. These are not well managed for long term, invasive species, fire risk.
Increase trust in process will lead to increase transparency of the process.
Regulatory burden / Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) responsible wood audit - a way for RFA's to streamline and promote cascading of regulatory, legislative requirements.
Look at science over entire rangeland, don't just let emotional science and greenies drive decisions.
Better more transparent and accurate monitoring with reviewing of coupes and listings for endangered species.
Smarter zoning.
More transparent decision making.
Scientific analysis over the whole landscape - not just a narrow area.
Strategic rotation of protected areas - whilst trees re-grow.
Investment in threatened species outside of logging coupes, so that we don't just have records in coupes.
Commit to reviewing the protections (buffers and special protection zones) within the Code of Practice.
Accountability for not enforcing legislation. This needs to be enforceable and fair to industry compensation for lost income due to zoning and activist restrictions.
Transparent evidence based and accountable decision making.
Need certainty to invest in new equipment to be able to achieve modern logging practice.
Increase regulation framework to better support a sustainable forestry industry.
Increase adaptive by giving options e.g. post fire events.
Adaptivity of RFA framework is the balance which is fluid between what makes the industry sustainable and the balance for comprehensive, adequate and representative reserves.

Change the ideology and the rhetoric around forests being rare and needing to be managed.
We need to change the way we think if we had no forests, it's not just for our future, it's also for the environment.
We don't have all the information. RFA's need to acknowledge that they need new information and data.
Monitoring enforcement and compliance needs to be independent.
Need transparency of compliance activities against the code of practice. Need to be clear on process and who to call on.
Would like to see more tourism and recreational opportunities in the forest and transition away from logging.
Logging is taking a big impact on the State Forest and the coupes. This impacts the community roads and no option to make VicForests fix roads.
The improvements should tighten up accountability.
Review every 5 years or some frequency instead of not at all.
Transparency of monitoring efforts by DELWP.
Improved monitoring.
Increase in flexibility to take in current science.
Respond to changes as a whole.
Adequacy of Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative reserve system.
Factor in findings from independent reviews on effectiveness of government compliance efforts.
Reporting on compliance.
Workers rights and work site protections for forestry workers and contractors.
We need to expand the reserve area.
Cease logging in Rubicon Forest for a minimum of 10 years.
Timber production have to protect other values.
Reserves actually need to meet JANIS criteria and meet Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) outcomes.
Assessment of invasive species impacts, example deer and blackberries.
Code of Forest protection needs to have a definition of retained vegetation to ensure biodiversity outcomes.
Five yearly reviews need to assess the requirements that are set by the Victorian Government - code, precautionary and principle.
More research into protection for understory material.
Closed catchment needs to acknowledge not part of tourism.
Commit to 5-year reviews - make mechanism in RFA so they definitely happen. Doing the reviews will help with the legitimacy of the RFA's and also give opportunity to keep them updated.
High value, low volume harvest.
Need independent assessment of coupes.
Restrict development and subdivision near forests.
Open forests back up to tourism.
Invest properly in compliance stop commercial quality illegal take of firewood.
Greater reliance on plantation timber.
Low-volume high yield.
Selective logging not clear-felling.

Total utilisation of the trees that are harvested (no burnings).
Pre-harvest surveys and validation should all happen by DELWP first.
Convert jobs, plantations, eco-tourism and farming.
Employ more rangers and staff, move the jobs to recycling etc.
Forest access for all users.
Better fire control processes.
Fire breaks and track maintenance.
Ensure different industries are held to the same standards. For example, power companies, timber industry and Parks Victoria.
Stand up to Green groups to protect industry and jobs.
Certainty to businesses, so family planning and succession planning can be managed.
Tourist towns should not have timber harvesting within 20-30kms.
No balance between timber industry and environmental - forest management system not working.
National Parks do not include forest management. Issues including invasive species, no access.
Stretched for forest officers. Need more to ensure everyone is being watched equally.
No negotiation or logic with environmental groups, all or nothing approach.
Focus on tourism - over other values like industry
Locking national park areas doesn't work and is harder to manage for everyone
Better data and views about the forest and the animals in the forest to inform the zoning system.
No standard views or verification process for detection of species. Forest industry has information from on the ground that is not been taken into account.
Pest management (particularly deer management) need to be accounted for in forest management procedures from a safety and ecological perspective.
Support for the people in the industry.
Consideration of outdoor tourism, which is being constrained by VicForests conflicting messages from environmental/economic.
Increasing and strengthening compliance.
We need to study the behaviour of species, of biodiversity, of the forest areas for viable populations, before they allocate logging coupes.
There needs to be better management of water quality around logging areas.
Providing more certainty for timber industry, as currently leading to less confidence in the community with not as many new employees and industry is not able to receive investments due to low confidence.
Impacts of fires has to be considered as the localised impact can be hard.
Standards should improve along with knowledge and science.
Qualitative assessment of RFA's on a 3-year basis, on biodiversity not just species to be more responsive.
Local council should support their industries not state they don't support native forestry and attempt to hinder industry through road curfews.
Need better communication of zoning and arrangements generally maps need to be better so people can understand.
Biodiversity surveys on landscape scale pre-harvest.
Assist the industry move to new job prospects and exit the industry.
2009 fires and Leadbeater's Possum are pushing logging out towards Alexandra, this is affecting tourism which is the major industry here.

Increased focus on protection of water shed and yield.
Guideline for what timber can be sold for minimum price.
Native forest left alone, we should transition to plantations.
Education for everyone else about the industry.
More facts into the wider community about the industry.
Actually, review every 5 years and implement changes needed.
Accountability of governments.
Give guaranteed access to long term logging areas, so that we can get the benefit of investing in reforestation of degraded or fire killed forests.
Currently 10,000's of hectares of land in state forests don't have trees as no one has funding or investment confidence to replant these areas.
More regard to endangered species, plants and animals, regulation properly enforced.
Plants and animals should be protected for the future, once damage is done then it is too late.
Endangered species and move to make trees, like forest contractors will have to move if no native forest marketing continues.
Making by-product from other materials.
RFA's need to provide certainty for the forest industry - ensuring there are correct plans and procedures in place and accountability checks.
Resource security.
Ensure the correct plans are in place and regular reviews happen and are communicated.
Accountability over milestone around guarantee of supply.

#### Q4. How could the potential improvements in the consultation paper help modernise the Victorian RFAs?

There needs to be more clarity and transparent evidence based on decision making by the Government.
Assistance from government relating to training and employment such as traineeships.
Better messaging about management techniques. The techniques currently used are influenced by public negative perceptions which lead to bad practices that cost more money.
If timber industry continues, will need to increase price.
Not a balanced narrative - environment focus.
Clear communication and better governing state entities about who is responsible.
More research and feedback about National Parks and how they are managed.
Are the burn management plan effective against bush fires - should cattle grazing be considered?
Misinformation about the industry. No information about forest management. (Need) education at primary school level.
Holding people accountable, including in the media. We should campaign - education, media advertising about the forest management work.
Carbon accounting rule - native forests needs to be accounted for. Carbon trading and offsetting emissions. Native Forests be included.

## Q5. How do you use forests in your region?

I use it for; horse riding, driving, bike riding, camping, tourism, forest bathing - enjoying this beautiful space in Toolangi.
I use them for; hiking, birdwatching, spotlighting possums and gliders, having an opportunity to immerse myself in a natural environment.
Learning about a variety of environments and ecosystems.
Sightseeing.
Use for economic values, sustainable building products, sawmilling, harvesting, haulage, employment, community livelihood and regional economies. Also, I use it for camping, hunting, recreational activities and wellbeing.
I tend to stay out of the forest as I don't benefit the forest at all. I get benefits from the forest via the clean air, water and the species.

## Q6. How could the RFAs better provide for multiple forest uses (i.e. recreation, conservation, livelihood and economy)?

I have been to many forests around the world and the pathways and access have brought economic security to the local people.
Education for schools, Preschools, Youth groups, on how to protect our environment and protect from climate change, bush fires. An old growth forest is much less likely to burn. Need to maintain our native forest to protect now and for the future.
I cannot see how RFA's in the current state can apply, when they have exemptions from environment protection laws. It is unbelievable.
The establishment of more National Parks will increase tourism and education.
Stop logging intact mature forest.
Remove logging from native forests to allow other uses.
Certainty for industry.
Roads are used for multiple uses.
Sustainability of forest management for industry provides initial part for further forest uses.
Financial incentives?
I regard this question as irrelevant and hazardous to the native forest. The most important use for the native forest is to not use it at all. All forests use, commercial or otherwise, should take a lower priority than its preservation.
Whole of public land planning. Need to plan better for multi-use. For example, don't put walking tracks where logging will occur.
Utilise the timber industry, incorporate access and infrastructure works while harvesting equipment is in the area. Open up more of the historical timber mills, tramlines, relic machinery into walking tracks and visitation sites. Show off recent logging sites, don't try to hide them.
Utilise the forest to promote ecotourism, more sustainable long-term industry.
RFA based on 20 years seen as unsustainable. We need try to promote tourism, outdoor recreation and healthy pursuits which are out of reach or directly competing with these aims rather than working collaboratively.
The economy of the Shire does not rely on VicForests. VicForests are actually a drain on the resources of council, due to major damage to our roads and the fact that they are no mills left in the Shire. There were 11-12 mills 20 years ago, now there are none.
For our local economy we have to think of alternative pursuits, (economic) for our residents and visitors alike, such as Glamping and abseiling etc.
Important to maintain access for hunting - both dogging and stalking, the removal of introduced species from the native forest is imperative both for the economy, the native species and habitat.
Need to continue to provide easy access to groups who want a 'fast food' type approach to nature, as well as those who like greater immersion. The fast food approach will lead in to greater immersion and still maintains the economy.



Q7. What are your views on existing environmental protections afforded across the entire forest estate (including parks, reserves and State forests) through the RFAs?

They have trashed the forests and contributed to the decline of fauna and flora.
The RFA and clear-felling has removed most of the mature eucalypts as well as the majority of mature (often centuries old) understorey species. This degrades and simplifies the ash forest ecosystem and is a huge problem with long-term consequences.
RFA and clear-felling has targeted the past 1939 regeneration, and this changed the age-class structure and removed the best of this maturing element that represents the successional replacement of mature (old growth) wet sclerophyll forest.
Fair compensation for productive areas lost.
Provisions should be included in RFA.
Contingency coupes outside vetoed or coupes that are on hold.
We need more monitoring to know. How well is the Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative reserve system fulfilling its function?
I find these useless, this can be demonstrated by the very low level of prosecutions and convictions. A major protective process for forests is education of children by actual visits - this never happens.
Not adequate - decisions can be overturned by the Minister, environmental protection needs to consider water quality of this catchment with climate change our rainfall is predicted to be less and with loss of regulation this will also affect rain bands.
Need key areas that are protected but with proviso that pest species can be humanely culled - important to focus on locals for this as they are the ones who know the area.
Despite protections, key threatened species declining.
Loss of large hollow bearing trees underestimated protections required.
Roading network and coupes impacting on ability for animals to move through forest.
Need firewood permits to better regulate.
Difficult physically and legally to rehabilitate road networks created for harvesting.
Impact of hazardous tree removal for planned burning.
The lock it up and leave it approach to conservation ignores the fact that our landscapes have been modified and managed by humans for 40,000 + years. We need to actively manage our forests to get the results we want.
There is little to no evidence to suggest outcomes for wildlife are better in National Parks than in State Forest. Wild fire, pests and climate change have greatest impact and going unchecked in National Parks.

Q8. How could the environmental protections be improved?

Remove Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act exemption.
Standardise categorisation system for threatened species, under state legislation.
Acknowledge definition of Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management (ESFM) outlined in National Forest Policy - to which the RFA's refer to. For example, what do we enjoy now that future generations wont in terms of non-desalination water and wildlife species.
Remove native timber logging from RFA's.

We need to take climate change seriously, protect and encourage maturation of all Central Highlands and other RFA area forests that are the natural mitigation strategy that has evolved in recent millennia.
Authentic sightings of possums.
Credible transparent evidence-based reasoning behind forest management zones.
Improved techniques for managing national parks. Industry are investing in improved technology and techniques, Parks Victoria and DELWP should do the same.
Address predation (feral cats/foxes/deer) we need better management of predation.
Address introduced species (deer, etc) and the impact this has on regeneration success.
Commercialise deer meat.
All forests should be certified and audited to the Australian Standard - audits mean the government needs to have management systems in place (engagement, monitoring and planning). Irrespective of tenure.
Active management of forests and parks. Don't assume you change tenure, and everything will be okay.
Should collect and use good data. Need valid information, is essential for good forest management. Invest in good monitoring, evaluation systems and frameworks.
Establish key performance indicators and ensure goals are met.
Compliance - Code of Practice - independently audited not DELWP.
We need better management of environmental weeds and pest animals - particularly deer.
Including species range not just sighting location to determine extent of protection zones that encompass corridors to mix genetically for viable populations to thrive.
Need to resource enforcement to regulate firewood and timber industries.
Allow active management, thinning and selective harvesting to improve water yields in catchments after bushfire. Promoting faster development of large hollow bearing trees. Thinning to reduce fire risk and select trees to benefit biodiversity.
Improvements in harvesting could be improved, e.g. old growth being harvested in East Gippsland. A better balance between economic.
Look at the landscape strategically and make best choices about where harvesting takes place. Areas that are suitable regrowth but not to ever be harvested - these forests could be swapped.
Biodiversity ensure that forest fire management is taken into account.

## Q9. What opportunities could the RFAs provide to support access to and traditional use of forests by Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people?

We need to stop the logging of intact mature forest. Increase the National Parks.
Support connection to country. Increase role for Traditional Owner's in fire management and burning. Provide access for Traditional Owner's to National Parks - take the pressure off general management zone.
The role for Traditional Owner's in regeneration burns - explore the scale, as it might be too large.
Potential for Traditional Owner involvement and benefits from tourism in national parks. Traditional Owner's help us to see forests in a different way.
Education by both and all sides.
I would like to comment but the almost total lack of information and understanding prevents it.

Encourage indigenous people to train and follow careers in land management jobs, so they can combine traditional practices and modern management, provide scholarships or financial support.

Does this not totally contravene Indigenous culture?

Q10. How could the RFAs enable the legal rights of Traditional Owners to partner in land management and seek economic and cultural opportunities to be realised in future forest management?

Are there any proposals to consider?

Could involve the sharing of knowledge of Traditional Owner's with the general public. How Traditional Owner's successfully managed Australia's landscape prior to colonial settlement, and into the future. Sharing of knowledge and using traditional practices, employing Traditional Owners in this. Could involve workshops, skill-sharing, opening of cultural centres where conversations and sharing of knowledge are available.

Need to engage at all levels with Traditional Owners on all public land not just national parks.

Employment opportunities to study burning techniques (possibly cooler burns for grasslands rather than forest stubble burn).

Complex in boundaries of ownership still undetermined with clans and this needs to be worked through, so understand that communicating with the right clan.

Q11. How could the RFAs consider climate change and other large-scale natural disturbances (including bushfires)?

Climate change needs to be at the forefront of any decision-making process. Latest climate and ecological science is indicating large scale reforestation is a vital lever to mitigation and adaptation and needs to be happening now.

The RFA needs to use levers which enable regeneration and protection of larger areas, enabling the investment of funds and resources in action at a raft of levels, rather than extractive forestry practices. Net zero emission across the supply and export chain should be a target, or the industry shouldn't continue.

Peer reviewed research which shows that logging increases fire intensity. Fire risk must be included. We are already in climate change and experiencing more fires, yet logging is allowed, making our forests and our neighbourhoods more fire prone and prone to higher intensity fires and spread of fires.

Consider increase in wind velocity caused by logging.

Consider increased failure to revegetate - already seen an increase in frequency, due to climate change and increased past populations.

One-word carbon. More people - equals more fires. First strike capacity needs to be dramatically improved.

Retain the most carbon dense forests in the world - retain their carbon. Logging converts stored carbon to paper and smoke.

To my knowledge they don't mention climate change and prioritise climate change action.

Logging increases risk of bushfires in the immediate vicinity.

Logging increase release of carbon dioxide and removes natural carbon sinks, resulting in increased warming.

Locking in 20-year agreements when we have less than 11 years to limit warning according to the IPCC is reckless and irresponsible, to ourselves and future generations.

Climate change mitigation needs to include the effects of deforestation. The number one rule; you can't fix the problem if you don't acknowledge there is a problem. We need honest and responsible acknowledgement of what the results of harvesting are: i.e., small amounts of intact 'old growth', extinct species, fires are becoming more frequent and larger. Why? Significant climatic events are becoming more frequent and catastrophic. What can we do? The industry needs to be sustainable i.e. use of pine plantations and hemp, for paper products, timber for homes. Create new industries that employ our rural communities, provide training for the younger generation in TAFE. Government to support 'new start up' of fully sustainable industries in rural communities.

Fire salvage.
Logging tracks used for fire access.
Regenerating trees, store carbon and replaces fire lost trees.
Allow for adaptive management. A catastrophic fire event, emergency provisions to enter forest in reserves.
Supporting the industry, enables cost effective sustainable housing for growing population and is better for the environment rather than importing less environmentally friendly wood product.
Better management of fuel load and access, roads, both on reserve and coupes to achieve this. This will reduce and mitigate wildfire impacts.
In absence of a contracted industry no capacity to fight fires or it will only be achieved through expensive, high cost alternative.
Landscape scale consideration of management arrangement.
Consideration of the timber asset in RFA fire management - this may save trees over buildings which can be quickly replaced.
Articulating how industry management of the timber leads to biodiversity enhancement, reduced fire fuel loads and risk to community.
We are experiencing more high-severity bushfires, as a result of logging, which increases flammable, lower-canopy understory. Due to hotter, drier summers and weather. RFA's need to put more emphasis on phasing out logging while providing employment in conservation and tourism areas.
Carbon lock up is not understood by the public or government, needs more understanding of carbon. For example, logging or utilization of the carbon locked up timber, rather releasing the carbon lock up in decay.
To have the capacity to organise and implement forestry programs to manage change and disturbance, there needs to be a professional forest industry to carry out the work. Once the experience, roads, machinery and personal are gone it would be very difficult to ever get it back, especially to respond to rapid moving disturbance, such as disease and fire.
Rather than move out of designated coupes to fulfil quotas, if the forest isn't available then so be it. Do not move out of allocated areas - they have been protected as no-go areas for a reason. When there is a bush fire it can destroy designated coupes and should be allowed to regenerate naturally. In relation to water catchment - climate change is predicting less rainfall when it comes more of it - this catchment supports numerous small communities.
Acknowledge the work and contribution that forest workers play when bushfires occur and the important role this has for communities affected by bush fires. Bushfires are greatly reduced saw log and furniture timber which meant after 2009, timber killed in fire was only good for pulp wood.
Recognise the carbon benefits of forest management and that carbon is captured in wood products.
Encourage further research into the carbon cycle in relation to forestry and wood products.
As climate change continues, less areas of Victorian Ash forests available. Start incorporating species that are more adaptive and native to Australia but also suitable for timber. RFA could take account for this and balance that. More research into this area to see the effects.
Contract with VicForests - account for bush fires in renegotiation of next contract after a fire - working okay already.
Salvage areas need to be accounted for in the RFA. Potentially areas that were not in 5 years area could be available soon. Could this be included in the RFA. Adaptability and flexibility in the plans, for instance to make available areas that have been affected by fire (which may not have been available). More research about the life of tree (after fire) to make sure commercial viability.

## Q12. How could the RFAs better address industry sustainability?

Make an RFA 5 years or less and assess by independent people, not by the industry itself.
This shouldn't be in the hands of VicForests.
DELWP to act as a conservation department and not mopping up for VicForests.
RFA's must exclude logging - therefore the industry will be overall more sustainable. We will have more water available for farmers and manufactures, water costs will be kept down due to less reliance on de-salination water, there will be more tourism and more recreation.
Support a rapid transition to alternative employment. We should have plantations, alternative fibre, waste management, pine and hemp for paper/timber products.
By referring to Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and translating this Act into a 'State Version'.
RFA's could be audited by independently and not by Government.
Native timber requires little management, trees don't need to be maintained to reduce knots for timber or remove gnarly bits to make them harder to mill. Eventually industry will have to grapple with management as the trees grow back (i.e. plantations after reseeded).
Where are our building materials coming from if not locally?
Special protection zones and general management zones have fair compensation for areas lost (volume and species).
Certainty for industry.
Healthy cooperation between government departments.
Better communication of this to the community on valuation of the resource being harvested and the industry.
Industry needs a volume not a spatial area - industry is at a 'tipping point'.
Clear understanding, clarity and certainty of available resource in medium to long term to facilitate industry investment along the supply chain.
20 year rolling agreements needs to be tied to scale of harvest (minimum industry scale).
Investment and surety of return and to build confidence in the industry, this will enable investment to bring prices down and the efficiencies and labour development, research and development advancement.
Allows competition against imports to address trade deficit.
Need reviews to be triggered for more than just timber yield, reducing yield can't be the default / balancing item, not consistent yield reductions.
Read RFA to clearly understand how to meet the above point.
Volumes outlined in RFA need the information about how achieved.
Need to encourage better collaboration between all stakeholders, governments, agencies and communities.
Mechanisms for review of species listings need to be built into RFA.

Is there a deficit in economic return from hard wood pulp to the other industries mentioned in 3.1.4? if so, why not invest in the other industries for a higher return?
By becoming sustainable itself. It is a finite industry and to renew the agreement for another 20 years seems incredible - struggling to find coupes to meet quotas. Shouldn't review in 20 years very questionable it should be 10 years.
More job certainty would make it easier to bring in new people. People don't want to join an industry if they can't see or don't know about the future is for that industry.
Financial services have stricter rules to lend money to replace machines because banks can't see certainty in industry. This means outlaying more of our own money.
Giving guaranteed access to logging would allow investment in reforestation projects, forest improvement works and thinning. We currently can't do this work as it is too financially risky, we could spend a million on replanting bare state forest and get no return if it gets turned in to a park or Special Protection Zone overnight.
We are currently harvesting a small percentage of Victoria's forests. We are also replanting Victoria's forest which is a part of the industry that is not known about. The education around the forest industry is very low and should be increased.
There needs to be better accountability for decisions that affect contractors, or at least adequate notice.
Industry needs support to balance the challenges presented by changing forest management to meet certification requirements or other demands.
There is tension between the demands of sawmills for certain logs and what can be cut from the available forest.
They need security to be able to invest in equipment to process smaller timber.
Honour guaranteed volumes. Industry is already environmentally sustainable. Trend of continued reductions in supply is not.
Tourism - not sure what's holding back now. Tourists are not wanting access areas, they are attracted to areas in the National Park.
Majority of forest has access for tourism already. Tourists will visit if there is something of accessible importance. Ending forestry will not improve tourism, nor will it generate the same economic benefit.

### Q13. How could the RFA's encourage investment and new market opportunities for forest-based industries (including the forests and wood products industry, tourism, apiary and emerging markets such as carbon)?

We should keep the forest timber for local use and not send it overseas as timber or wood chips.
Value every part of a tree, conserve the best timber and only wood chips the waste.
Make reserves available to protect as much forest as possible.
By excluding logging, leaving some forest for the other forest-based industries to use. We should remove burning of wood from inclusion as renewable resource.
Government should promote and publicise industry.
Look at other examples of forest and associated industries.
Alternative building product demand.
Certainty and future commitment. This encourages investment.
VicForests contract awarding fairness and accounts for economic values.

Reducing negative public perception and sentiments towards harvesting - clear-felling.
Diverse opportunities for contractors. Educate the public on harvesting techniques.
Opportunities for diversification into harvesting of new species to be harvested for new products.
Very keen for multi-use forests and development of infrastructure to support that. For example, roads.
RFA's could build education of forests and forestry through broader usage.
Debunk some of the false statements that are out in the public.
Better resourcing of education and outreach.
Encourage technological advancements.
Don't forget about us!
Further investment and incentive of funding of independent bodies providing jobs in the forest management. We should analyse the return from Australia's biodiversity in tourism, water production and evidence-based community information of climate stability from carbon storage.
Giving the framework and support to long term access to forest resources will allow and encourage investment. Investment now is impossible as we could lose access to timber at any moment.
Setting aside connected areas of forest, assisting with carbon sequestration support biodiversity, encourage ecotourism and forest food products.
Education around carbon lock up and forest industry - for the green movement and also the forest workers.
By-product from road clearing operations should be available to industry.
Need and security in the industry, in order for companies to make investments including into new technologies (that would assist in carbon).

**Q14. How can the RFAs support the adaptive management of Victoria's forests in response to emerging issues (e.g. major bushfires) and opportunities (e.g. emerging industries)?**

Stop them now. Do not renew for 20 years. There will be no native forest left, transition to plantation needs to happen. Leave the native forest that is still standing alone! Look at the science of fires, climate change and carbon.
Move to industries that can live well within the environment we have and not continually destroyed by clear-felling and then burning the waste. There should be no waste of wood.
Adaptive management requires a huge increase in monitoring in order to be implemented.
Victoria's forests are currently not being managed in accordance with the principles of Adaptive Management, which they need to be.
There is little evidence that Victoria's forests are being managed adaptively. A review is required to determine the levels which Victoria's forests are being managed in accordance with the principles of adaptive management.
Ash forests are red listed (meets International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria for listing as threatened) under international standard. Why is it still being logged?
Take account of current and ongoing science and studies. The research is done - see ANU ecological research in the Central Highlands. It's a 35 years old continuous research by recognised scientists with numerous peer reviewed papers. There is no reason to re-consider any of the findings of this long-term research. There is virtually every forest that needs to be considered, already researched in terms of ecological services and ecological health of the Central Highlands.
Preparedness for bushfire events. Access roads and first response - having first responders available.
Removal of dangerous trees.

Better prevention and first response to bushfires to minimise impacts on forests and all the values.
Fire salvage logging to support continuation of harvest operations.
Is the Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative reserve system still the best quality habitat?
Infrastructure in state forest that supports emerging industries.
There is a mountain of evidence to support the need for forest conservation for carbon storage of ground - water management. RFA's could support more emerging industries around protection, conservation and scientific understanding. Need more opportunities available with tourism within the industries of science, parks and management. There is an increase with bushfires, RFA's need to adapt to scientific evidence that suggests a connection between logging and wildfire.
Education programs for Mountain Ash and Alpine (Redwood program in USA).
Enforcement and compliance.
Ridgeline protection.
Whole of public land planning - no separation of the vision and strategy.
Agree with whole of public land planning - not an ad hoc basis but a strategic approach, realistic and face the impending end to this finite industry. Transitioning those in the industry to other emerging industries associated with forests. For example, pest management.
Emerging industries - native based tourism. Alexandra has a mothballed abattoir that could re-open to deal with the massive deer population that are destroying horticultural industries in the area and are hazard on our roads.

## Q15. What areas of research would better equip us to sustainably manage Victoria's forests?

Take account of the economic study done for the Great Forest National Park proposal.
Take account of the ecological services study by ANU, value of water and carbon included.
Impact of forestry on fungi, soil, lichens, invertebrates, regeneration burning (more frequent and cooler burning) on biodiversity and ecosystem health.
How can we protect Victorian forests from myrtle rust (now established in NSW & QLD)? How best can we protect Mountain Ash and Alpine Ash forests from climate change influences on their genetic viability?
Local knowledge and experience.
Targeted research on species in harvested areas. Need more broad research.
Credibility of scientific process.
Transparency.
How quickly the forest bounces back after bushfires - e.g. Leadbeater's Possums return to burnt areas. Move surveys across the landscape to understand species adaptation to bushfires.
Above, good idea however, this mapping reveals remaining vegetation - doesn't indicate the biodiversity remaining within the remaining vegetation and whether what is left is adequate to support remaining biodiversity. So, more monitoring of the remaining areas pre and post logging.
Needs to be increased for investments, ensuring that research is relevant to the industry and communicated with the industry. Need good forestry science.
Need research into Leadbeater's Possum into area.
Research into areas that could be used for multiple use and harvest.
Available and suitable land to plant plantation and for the correct type of plantation. For example, prioritise for higher value time and or areas designated for paper. Research into best species/ways to manage. Need resource security in order to make decisions.



Research into Agroforestry estate. Data and information about value of having timber production or farmland, may assist farmers to make decisions about changing land to forestry.

If plantation land is found - not take it out of sustainable yield. Timber industry hit upfront, but plantation may be damaged, or fire affected, or only used for paper.

## Q16. How could the RFA monitoring, review (including the five-yearly reviews) and reporting arrangements be improved?

Yes, until this one expires, there should be no long-term contracts. Who is doing the reporting? Can local, state and federal government of all parties work together to protect our beautiful native forests, fauna and flora.

There is a lack of transparency. Reviews haven't been undertaken on time or not all. Will this change? Will there be penalties?

Reviews need to be undertaken to assess the quality of the Central Highlands forest in accordance with a scientifically rigorous assessment method.

Ash regeneration is only a small part of any quality and biodiversity metric.

DELWP should introduce some real penalties for breaches, real independent overview of forests.

Is the Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative reserve system meeting its objectives or fulfilling its function.

Surveys within the reserve system, not just general management zone.

How is it bouncing back after bushfires?

The RFA monitoring and review needs to look at how the new information is affecting what the lack of accountability for the Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative system, is the system doing its job? The reviews lead to look at this. In Victoria more forest is going into the Special Protection Zone areas and essentially into a reserve system and less into General Management Zones. This system should be reviewed as part of the 5-year RFA review.

The reporting system every 5 years needs to report more transparency to public and to industry.

Reviewing the Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative system should look at if that area of the Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative system is still functioning the way it should.

Annual visit from Commonwealth to monitor how the RFA is tracking.

Federal funding for surveys.

More emphasis could be put on day to day operational monitoring, particularly of the forestry industry. Numerous breaches of Special Protection Zone (SPZ) and the logging of areas where significant species have been found, has taken place and takes place continuously. This places mistrust in the industry and its ability to proactively monitor of conserve species.

Seek feedback and advice from the land managers on what changes and patterns they are identifying in the forest, to help guide what research and data collection needs to be done to scientifically determine change before major impacts are seen.

Monitoring of the compliance of the Code of Practice by an independent group not DELWP who have vested interest. More transparency with the public and dissemination of information (factual). Broaden the report to include councils review and tourism industry (local) - ask locals on ground in broad range services to community.

Ensuring rules are complied with.

## Other Comments/Concerns

Unregulated coupe burns, in autumn and spring, impacts on air quality, decrease amenity, early bushfire protection. How can they be regulated to mitigate health impacts? As there was a particular problem in 2019 Easter burn.

Difference of a fuel reduction burns - disguise coupe burns.

Where is VicForests in this engagement process?

Weed infestation from forestry.

We need to improve monitoring and compliance of weed management (e.g. clean down machines).

Strawberry farmers water use; creek levels drop over a long period.

Root rot - DELWP map - Need to control transmitting of fungal infection.
Climate change is happening, why are we still clear-felling native forests, knowing it reduces water yield and quality as well as in mature native forests results in the greatest water yields.
Knowing Melbourne's population is increasing dramatically, and water requirements are increasing as fire, climate change and logging continue to reduce water yield.
Young forests are more prone to fires, which escalates the issue, species loss and danger to humans. Crown fires are increasing.
Climate change emissions (post logging burns) and carbon impacts are too high.
Air quality from post logging burns has huge health implications, as opposed to plantations.
Post logging burn increases and encourages monoculture, hot regeneration.
Living outside of the RFA, so this isn't relevant to me. The false arrangement of timber and the economy. The false economy won't stack-up against new economies.
There has been a lot of misinformation about native forest timber harvesting. There needs to be more done to promote the good.
Who maintains the logging tracks for bushfire access if the timber industry closes?
I wouldn't like to see the native forest industry gone altogether.
Some high-grade sawlogs are being sold as low grade (D-grade) logs or even as pulp logs in order to meet large supply contracts.
Concern over process and timing is not convenient for working stakeholders to attend drop-in sessions.
Why consult, if RFA's are going to be extended anyway?
The use of the word modernisation is not appropriate. It should be 'reviewed' not 'modernised'.
The community would like more management of the forests, not more contractors. We need more enforcement across the whole of the forest system not just RFA areas.
There has been a lack of communication. No paper delivery to us, newsletters and emails to our local community, Toolangi Primary School. Our forest track should be protected, reformed after logging and clear-felling ceased.
Very little volume of native hardwoods is used by building industry - they are being used for cardboard, pulp. This is not a valid argument.
Why do we still harvest native forestry? Why can't we follow suit with New Zealand?
More value in carbon in our forests than there is in forestry practices.
Employment and Aboriginal employment opportunities would increase in transitioning forests for non-logging industries.
Improve regulatory framework to ensure enforceability of protections in approved action statements.
Link scientific measurement and ecosystem health metrics to the RFA objectives.
Impact of harvesting on the 'health of Victoria'.
Leadbeater's Possum - I have a lot of comments!
The role of tolerable fire intervals, regeneration burns do not create sustainable management.
Consideration of natural regeneration post harvesting, not burning
VicForests audit process problematic.
Accountability and regulation of coupe burns for air quality.
Case studies of timber towns transitioning to other economies.
Victoria Government to negotiate from a position to end RFA's and allow for them to expire.
Investment instead to look at transition agreements to urgently develop other sources of pulp, such as plantations, industrial hemp.
Investment to transition in the full suite of forest services, carbon, tourism, climate change and water yield protection.

Why should the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation exemption continue?
50% has decreased for water yield which means the 150-year recovery time is mature mountain ash and Maroondah catchments. Within 50 years, climate change will decrease water for Melbourne by 33%.
How to model for bushfire risk in the timber release plan? By 2021, integrated forest fire management framework.
Regulation of coupe burns disguised as regeneration burns, emissions not counted.
Installation of monitoring and a warning system for vulnerable people.
Inconsistencies within and between jurisdictions regarding treatment of threatened species.
I would like to see state government do more to tell people about how forests need to be managed. Talk to the community about how the industry is more than just timber harvesting. We do road maintenance, tidying up the bush, fight fires and bush fire recovery.
It feels that the environmental groups are targeting the timber industry. Already a timber resource and management, fire etc has given us our current forest.
Good lifestyle and industry workers.
Have concerns about timing of workshops, would be better outside work hours.
Consultation fatigue, same questions being asked at multiple events. Feels like a 'tick box' exercise and not genuine.
Consultation on general use of forests, for example a new bike track, are not happening early enough. Feedback was asked too late in the process.
Better education system about forest management.
Salvage logging activities in national parks, need to be allowed. This would contribute to sustainable yield but means that less green wood needs to be harvested.
Allow for marketing of wood from national parks. At the moment, we are not allowed to sell wood legally obtained from the national parks.
Concerns about the government taking ownership of under management - including on private property.
Need to look at management in other states to pick up good practices.
Very frustrated with timing of sessions and lack of reporting on previous consultation, feel like it is just to tick a box.
Where will timber come from if it doesn't come from Australia? Does it come from Indonesia? Or other countries with less sustainable management.
How will the government support contractors with compensation for lost time, costs caused by protest action?
Why are the possums still listed as endangered when there have been so many found?
Sawmills use sustainable practices and invest. For example, using biomass to create energy and replace using natural gas, this reduces landfill.
We need security to continue to invest.
There have been no consequences for activists impeding harvesting activities. No compensation either for lost time and products etc.
Fair and balanced promotion of forest, science and operations.
Industry is a compromised and each year more and more sanctions are imposed. It is not sustainable.
Stop protestors at work sites, it has created a very stressful situation for individuals and families.
Credibility of citizen science questioned.

National Parks are not well managed for biodiversity species or fire risk.
Increase education - especially forestry's role in the carbon cycle.
Should be moratorium on logging until the Friends of the Leadbeater's Possum vs VicForests ruling.
Plantations deplete quality of soil, don't support ecosystem (monoculture) and don't provide quality product (hardwood), as they take a lot of ongoing maintenance (trimming branches) which is not cost effective.
Only good for pine in plantations.
Where would you plant the plantations? You would need to remove or change land usage to provide for land plantations, so you would need to remove agriculture of National Park land - this is still problematic.
Why can't we consider harvesting in national parks and reserves, if the RFA objectives can be met.
If timber isn't harvested here, it will be done in Indonesia - that has nowhere near the regulations that Australia does.
What research has been undertaken in relation to the Leadbeater's possum, in state forests verses national parks. There is a false viewpoint that Leadbeater's are more likely to thrive in National Parks.
Messages between the region and in town regarding reform messaging is important.
A lot of cynicism in the way the surveys are being undertaken. Bringing the Leadbeater's Possum into the coupe areas to make them not economical to harvest.
Why can't Leadbeater's Possum be called out of coupes given they can be called into the coupes?
Timber industry has constantly being harvested.
Broaden education about RFA achievements, sustainable forest management practices which promotes social licences.
International benchmarks.
Increase level of biodiversity.
Have had to reject \$750k contracts because no certainty of supply.
Big concern on mental health for the contractors.
Robust authentic surveying of coupes.
Repetitive engagement on same issues.
Protestors stopping and hindering harvesting operations, costing contractors and no repercussions for protestors. Threatened species review process.
Mental health of workers.
Industry have most to lose.
Who will contract for fire operations if no contractors present?
Open more areas for logging.
Global economic and social impacts of importing timber from off shore which is unethical.
We want healthy and positive co-operation between department - DELWP and VicForests.
Thank you for all your doing. Please keep fighting for this industry.
Address special protection zone issues - less last-minute removal of coupes and operational uncertainty.
More use of silviculture - particularly after bushfires, to improve forest outcomes, forest health, structure, water yields and big trees.
Salvage wood from burnt areas to support regeneration.

Look into international examples of how to manage forests. For example, in Japan, mini forests within cities.
Engage Victoria survey leading questions "what are you most concerned about?" Logging not an option.
Worksafe issues.
People wanting to be heard as there is a lack of trust.
Perception of timber industry footprint.
VicForests involvement.
Transparency on compliance by state.
Timber industry is key ally during fires and reducing risk of fire.
Need more communication around updated RFA.
Science seminar presenters.
Disappointed in independent consultation paper, short coming. This was an outright error for example the increase in plantations.
We don't have the timber yield.
RFA's should not be renewed until governance and values work have been completed. There is has been too much uncertainty. This should be renewed for only 1 year until sorted with moratorium for high ecological value areas and tree enforcement can be achieved by state.
Survey invasive species and plants, as part of looking at biodiversity.
Better enforcement of the codes of practice.
Need accurate modelling of sustainable yields and have them open to scrutiny.
Forestry contractors provide road maintenance, firefighting and rehabilitation services. If forest harvesting is stopped these contractors will close and these services won't be delivered.
Industry provides skilled machines - Bulldozers and Graders, operators that can not be replaced by civil contractors.
The forestry harvesting, and processing industry makes significant expenditure in the community. This flow on effect this keeps other businesses and services going - fuel stations, mechanics, grocery stores, doctors and schools.
It appears unfair with the State Government being half owner of the largest sawmill in the state. Stakeholders think that this mill gets unfair advantage.
Should improve wood utilization on coupes - woodchips some of the smaller logs, with mobile wood chippers.
Action Statements are inadequate, no government will implement.
Government needs to invest in auditing and implement monitoring performance with forest management.
Invest in plantations - what is happening? We need policy set in place and the right facilitation, linking private forestry growers to market to sell resources to.
Want to know more about preharvest surveys - need to improve on communication.
Allocation orders should play a more active role in resource management. 5 yearly harvest limits should consider wood flow estimates and resource availability.
We don't properly understand past management regimes for forests.
Not opposed to harvesting but think happening too much.
Compliance teams should be going out pre-harvest, inadequacy of surveys.
Firewood permits - high volumes.
Low-volume high return logging.

Flexibility to respond to bush fires and climate change.
Coupes too close and buffer strips get burned - approval of coupes.
Compliance.
Easy to build roads but difficult to close (permits and approvals).
Re-train harvesters into compliance roles.
Timber availability must continue, native forest management is farm forestry with regrowth is environmental diversity.
Tree farms (singular species) are not the way to go.
How will feral animals be controlled?
Unrestrained populations of deer will be detrimental.
Better forward planning and communication between road and land managers to ensure better road network management (grading in winter).
Fire work - timber harvesting equipment is needed to fight bushfires.
Without the timber industry, people and their families will leave town - rural and regional Victoria.
Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified - in relation to timber industry. This is not a standard across different countries. Not an even playing field. If we don't get FSC, we lose customers, these customers buy FSC timber from other countries whose standards are not the same as ours.
Firefighting relies on contractor equipment and skills.
If there is no timber industry the access to the forest will not be maintained. Toll roads will need to find other funding.
DELWP is a toothless tiger - enforcement of the code of forest practice is very poor.
Messaging about the timber industry is not correct.
City and country divide - great for people to move, changing the town at the expense of industry.
More education about the industry and agriculture, we used to have school tours for instance.
Forest industry is not feeling supported from shire (i.e. Funding not allocated to roads).
Forest industry supports the town (i.e. financially), but not recognised or reciprocated.
No acknowledgment about forestry industry bushfire management, there is lots of knowledge in the industry being overlooked.
Help to transition people out of the industry if need towards a new industry, such as training, mental health support.
Flexibility to respond to bush fires and climate change.
Coupes too close and buffer strips get burned - approval of coupes.
Compliance.
Easy to build roads but difficult to close (permits and approvals).
Re-train harvesters into compliance roles.
Timber availability must continue, native forest management is farm forestry with regrowth is environmental diversity.
Tree farms (singular species) are not the way to go.
How will feral animals be controlled?
Better compliance.
The condition of the roads due to log trucks needs funding from council to maintain.

Better messaging about the industry and how it contributes to carbon sequestration, including opposed to steel and plastic.
Better messaging and education about coupe burning and detrimental effects of leaving it on ground if it's to rot, as it releases methane.
Better education about forest management practices and forest industry.
Management practices are going backwards, allowing for practices to be governed by public perception and focussed on keeping the public happy.
Can we get visibility of this as it progresses?
If you lose the contractors, you lose the firefighting capability.
Alexandra is a supply town for the region, if the town under it would have flow onto other towns and the region.
Samba deer are an invasive species in our State Parks - impacts of pests in closed catchments.
Water quality changes for logging have increased in sediment, Snobs Creek and hatchery built.
Regrowth is an increase in water take.
85% increase in pulp.
Concerns about what we don't know about the full effects of human activity.
30km radius exclusion of townships.
Designated fossicking areas.
Keep access open for sapphires Tourmaline and Zircon.
Day out option for families.
Recreation uses beyond walking, riding and driving.
Update recreation pamphlet to include fossicking.
Young and growing trees store more carbon - old trees release carbon.
Fire salvage timber is important.
Contractors needed for fire response and for bush experience.
Why wasn't consultation held at Mansfield to cover Tolmie Woods plant and Strathbogie?
VicForests needs to regulate coupes to prevent clear-felling and logging truck drivers are breaking curfew.
Increasing obligation to meet environmental conditions but there hasn't been the same effort looking for the Leadbeater possum in the National Parks - 'there is a place for everything but no place for us'.
Instability in industry deters young people from seeking employment in the industry. Skilled workers are not easy to replace.
10 to 20 years plan about reduction as part of the forest management system.
Impact assessments prior to decision (how they affect towns).
Independent assessment about Leadbeater's Possum across the landscape - to inform decisions (including the National Parks).
Ensure that data and science underpins decisions.
Balanced media - one sided narrative. No timber group defending incorrect messages.
Turning areas into National Parks for tourism, this will not support town as described.
Timber industry - does not have a voice about decision regarding areas being locked up.

