



REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT JOINT ENGAGEMENT

SUMMARY REPORT: GIPPSLAND 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 or see: <https://www2.delwp.vic.gov.au/futureforests>

For more on Cloud Catcher see: 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

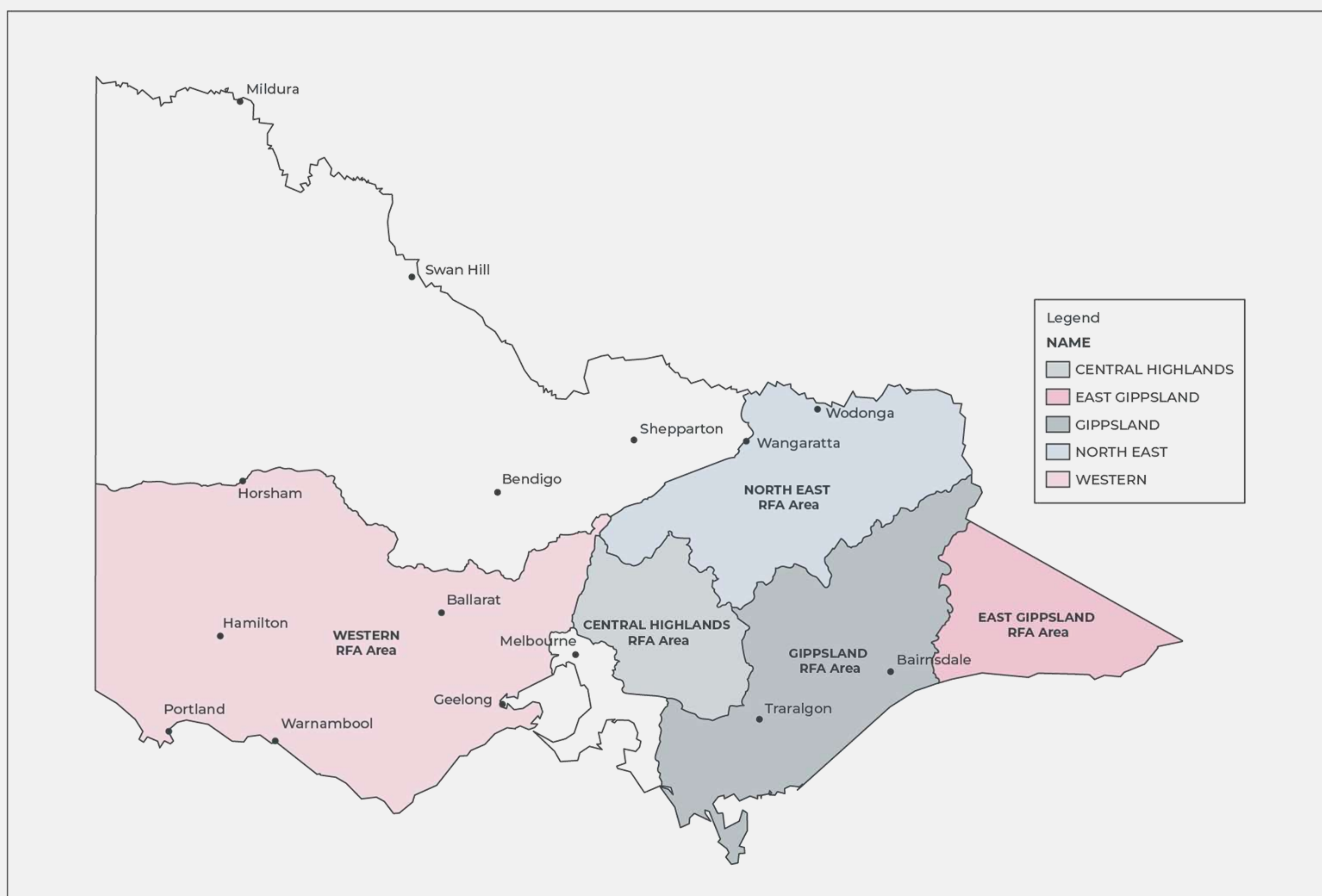
In instigating this engagement process on the Victorian Regional Forest Agreements, the Victorian and Australian governments have acknowledged the significant changes that have occurred since the RFAs were first signed 20 years ago, including the impacts of climate change, extreme weather events (including 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 Jackson¹ 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

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.

GIPPSLAND REGION SUMMARY

GIPPSLAND REGION

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

In Gippsland, stakeholders from the timber industry were invited to a workshop in Heyfield. Representatives of Environmental NGOs, local government, water authorities and catchment management authorities were invited to workshops in Traralgon. And a drop-in session was hosted for members of the general public in Bairnsdale. 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? In each section below, topics that we heard in response to these questions are listed in order of their frequency. That means those that appear first in each bullet list tended to be most commonly captured on reporting templates at events. Those that appear later were less common.

This small selection of quotes from the Gippsland RFA 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.

- “Actively involve Koori people in land management and apply indigenous knowledge to future forest management.”
- “Bushfires should not fund forest management. Forest management needs re-current, adequate funding irrespective of catastrophic bushfires.”
- ”Put foresters back in the forest. Need to actively manage forests... timber harvesting provides a source of revenue to support this. This would increase carbon storage, ferrel [sic] animal control, planned burning, track maintenance, thinning catchments to including water yields, benefit from carbon markets, bushfire first response.”

- “RFAs need to support industry to educate/inform/advocate for the important of cause of timber to both urban and regional communities.”

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:

- Reduction in the available area of harvest, resulting in fragmentation of the industry and the industry becoming less viable with flow-on to regional businesses and communities.
- Shrinking habitats, increase in invasive plants and animals and loss of diversity due intensive forestry practices.
- An increase in intensity and occurrence of bushfires, impacting on biodiversity and water availability.
- Innovation of Industry resulting in greater recovery rates and value-adding.
- Increase in forest use for tourism and recreation.
- Decrease in both compliance monitoring and active management by government.

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

- Community members called for greater investment in environmental protections to restore multi-aged forests and ensure the Victorian forest management system provides equivalent protection to the EPBC act.
- Provide a greater role for Traditional Owners in guiding forest management, including ensuring Traditional Owners who are local to the region are appropriately engaged so that they can influence the modernisation of RFAs.
- Enable and support Traditional Owner's use of forests for cultural purposes and consider employment opportunities which could be integrated with other commercial uses e.g. working with environmental groups on education/cultural awareness, working with forest workers on pre-harvest seed collection, pre-harvest identification of culturally significant trees, post-harvest regeneration of coupes.
- Use different forestry practices to have less impact on biodiversity and increase area available to harvesting to allow lower intensity harvesting occurs over a larger area.
- Recognise multiple forest uses, such as apiculture, and forest values, such as health and wellbeing.
- Timber industry suggested taking a landscape scale approach to species surveys.

Theme 2: Long Term Stability of Forests & Forest Industries

- Provide long-term certainty and stability for the timber industry by implementing 20-year rolling RFAs and a legislative mechanism to ensure supply and accountability. This will provide certainty and investment for forestry and associated industries.
- Provide for a transition to plantation-based forestry and growth of other industry outside of timber, such as carbon sequestration and accounting.

- Promote the timber industry and invest in public education to improve understanding of RFAs and the social license of forestry.
- Consider alternative sources of supply such as utilising the removal of dangerous trees, fire-salvage logging and fuel-reduction thinning.
- Acknowledge and address the fire risks posed by climate change by leaving old growth forest intact.
- Consider the impact of bushfires on all forest values, including water.
- Support forest dependant industries and uses such as tourism, apiculture and recreation.
- Consider alternatives sources of fibre to reduce reliance on timber.

Theme 3: Governance & Management of Victoria's Forests

- Increase funding for compliance enforcement.
- Improve forest fire management across all land tenures by revisiting tolerable fire intervals and drawing on the skills of the forestry industry, ensuring they are dispersed across the forest estate. Provide funding for replanting after bushfires.
- Adequate, recurring funding for proactive forest management i.e. not just after fires.
- Introduce incentives to control invasive plants and animals.
- Support local efforts and knowledge in forest management through better inter- and intra-government partnering.
- Improve forest road and track access for fire management and recreation.
- Acknowledge forestry's role in other services, such as firefighting and track maintenance.
- Improved signage to educate the public around land tenures, possible uses and future forestry operations.

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: GIPPSLAND 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?

The dangerous tree removal program.
The cabbage tree palms track.
Timber industry is slowing down.
Planned burns occurring in areas which don't seem to make sense e.g. cabbage tree creek which dries out an otherwise wet forest.
Trees removed along many roads which are hollow habitat trees.
Shrinking habitats.
Antagonistic battle has developed. Timber industry has declined and really hurting agriculture going through a drought.
Industries have been pushed in to a small corner which has made the industry fragmented and less viable.
Technology improvements have made jobs - made the industry attractive.
More value adds in the industry to a higher end use product through laminating and fungi joining.
Roads and trucks have got better so affordable to move ash further.
Increase in planned burns and burning in area that have been burnt before.
Hollow bearing trees have been burnt.
Machinery has made forests more efficient.
Forest attacked on 3 fronts 1. Planned burning 2. Forest operation 3. cutting trees for safety - roadsides and firebreaks.
Greater gliders - Forestry and fire are biggest impacts.
Disappearing wildlife corridors - too much roadside slashing, loss of amenity loss of understorey.
Clear-felling - creating isolated pockets of true forests by burning too many coupes.
Clear around one large old tree - but don't protect tree when no forest around it.
25 mills closed in Victoria in 2002.
2002/3 27 mills in Gippsland only 6 mills now.
Increase in bushfire severity, 2003, 2006/7, 2009, 2014.
Most of prescribed burn has deteriorated over last 20 years.
Loss of timber to bushfires.

In the 60s and 70s Victoria was world leading in forest fire management, not so much anymore. We live in most fire prone area in world, we can't control.
2006/2007 fires impacted the river and Glenmaggie Reservoir a 7% loss of capacity of Glenmaggie due to sediment in flow. Forest commission and crown lands - 2 organisations. Forest Commission Victoria stopped cattleman burning in 1920. Resulted in 1939 fires.
Impact on community - in the last 20 years, people moving out of towns.
What does stability in industry mean? Last 20 years stability has been overlooked. schools getting smaller, pubs have closed.
Change in communities, loss of services, have to go further for trades - electricians and plumbers.
Weeds lock up areas and weeds take over - wrong. Need cattle to control weeds, active plan based on science.
Bush destroyed by fires, animals disappearing.
Available area for harvesting has reduced is not replaced when removed due to threatened species detections.
Harvesting adjoining bee sites is having an impact on available pollen/nectar.
Decline in tree species diversity and greater area of monoculture.
Forest has not recovered due to consecutive wildfires impacting on biodiversity.
Shrinking supply of timber has led to a decline in towns, some are no non-existent.
8 trains of timber 60's/70's used to occur, towns now shut up.
Timber use in different areas has increased (medicine)
End product of timber has moved to a more structural and quality product. Different approach to management through VicForests now managing forestry.
Continual erosion to available resource.
Rules set up after the original RFA in tacking the net General Management Zone and Special Protection Zone as signed off. This has not been done so the General Management Zone has dramatically reduced, and Special Protection Zone increased in size.
Lack of consultation on these changes.
Detection based reserves system rather than landscape based as set up in RFA.
Increase in use of forests.
Lack of compliance activity.
Increase in abuse of forest from vehicles.
Increased firewood collection.
Shift in perception around forest protection - recognition of broader environmental values.
Increase of illegal creation of tracks.
Increase in tourism numbers.
Disconnection of forests.
Threatened species not reflected in RFA, not keeping up with vegetation class and Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) report.
Increase in large bushfires.
Increase community tension due to supply commitments.
Dying of forests due to conditions and thinning.
A drying climate. Increased bushfires and impacts on water quality and quantity.
Increase in citizen science contribution to data gallery. Surveying in forested area.
Administrative arrangements within regions have changed (Catchment Management Authorities [CMAs], water authorities) - more integration/partnership.
Changing community perception that people will be engaged (building trust and relationships).
Rise of social media - influence on politics.
Greater expectation of regulators that people be engaged.

Increase in exportation of local timber (native and plantations) as local process close down less certainty in plantations native forest timber industry (reducing investment).
Risk of over-engagement - engagement not being meaningful, decision already made and engagement tokenistic.
Shift towards environmental over industry outcomes.
Engagement process not balanced e.g. rent a crowd/campaigns by an ideological group - cities having more influence than regions (people have more influence on decisions they're not directly impacted by).
A lot more visitation, particularly on outskirts of CBD.
Transition towards zero waste (much greater recovery rates and innovation) - Ash and Fennings.
Mills diversifying, but transport costs to bring logs from other parts of the state, reduce economic viability.
Native forest timber industry run by Government (VicForests) not sawmills - since 2004.
Schemes in plantations industries have collapsed. Plantations being removed, and land reverted back to agricultural production.
Industry losing area under RFAs due to possums.
Further impediments to harvesting in addition to area placed in reserve.
Used to have thinning timber industry and employment now struggling.
Communities which rely on forests for tourism are concerned about loss of visual amenity tourism income, due to harvesting.
Insecurity of supply affecting people access to credit.
Public forest in South Gippsland contributes to tourism as economic value.
local business suffer from industry downturn.
Increased mental health issues due to stress and lack of certainty.
Loss of hardwood to fire.
Shift from hardwood to softwood plant actions, affecting biodiversity.

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

A commitment in the new RFAs to set the minimum species volume and quality for the next 20 years.
Climate change will require changes to policy and management.
Increase plantations.
Protect hollow-bearing trees.
Enable DELWP regional teams to better protect habitats.
Government to actively support communities to transition out of timber.
Connect decision makers to places where logging happens and communities in these regions.
Certainty and security for the timber industry - build the allocation order (AO) into legislation.
There are enough trees just not enough area to operate. We keep losing more and more to new national parks (NPs) used to be over cutting but not now.
Should be thinking about skilling timber industry workers.
Should be transition out of native forestry and quickly ban on logging old growth.
Remove Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) Act exemption.
Carbon capture of forests.
Value of whole forest, not just timber.
Multi-aged stocked forest, managed for forest harvesting, fire management, roading, maintain active management.
Having access to forest through road network, don't close off access, don't exclude trail bikes, people need to access so they value the land.
Maintain recreational access.

Would like to see forest restored to multi-aged alpine ash and mountain ash standards, having different aged trees from old growth to young, get this by relocating logging.
Surety of timber supply.
Better monitoring and management to enable future harvesting.
Consider multiple use of forests.
Balance of harvesting vs. preserved needs to be revisited.
Think longer term (beyond 20 years), look at resources, how can we increase (planting out areas). Trial plots easily employ more people, more active forest management that grows trees.
Climate change - timber can substitute for high carbon, e.g. growing trees capture carbon.
Stability for forest industry (long term).
Increase in funding for forest management/compliance enforcement.
Maintaining access for recreational use.
Recognition of Traditional Owners
Recognition of climate change.
Recognition of health and wellbeing values of forests.
Recognition of economic values of active and passive recreation.
Greater safeguards/protections to allow for increased tourism.
Need for greater management of forests to provide for multiple uses,
Starting with a healthy, resilient forest - what does that look like?
Management focusing on forest health and condition.
Create certainty for the private sector - guarantee of supply to timber for mills. Victorian government provide clear statement of intent for native forest timber industry. Outline transition opportunities away from traditional.
Develop a transition strategy to move from current mix of forest industries to future mix.
Need the skills of the forest industry dispersed across the forest estate for bushfire response.
Ensure maintenance of forest roads to provide access for first response to bushfires.
Trust in DELWP as land managers, was promised/what was delivered.
Revisit tourism as a driver for economic development in areas where forestry occurs.
Provide certainty for timber industry.

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

Improved forest fire management across all land tenures.
Eradication programs for feral animals in forests, like a bounty on all pests.
Invasive weeds need to be better managed.
More education on the effects of logging on biodiversity.
Transparency on logging operations of practices.
Factor in the emotional, social and psychological well-being of communities that live in forested areas.
Opportunity to put industry as a more sustainable footing.

Ecotourism initiatives can move ahead.
Recognise we are in transition - communities are suffering - purposeful effort put into this with local communities.
Timber harvesting that doesn't impact tourism - e.g. don't impact views and ridgelines.
Broaden thinking and get more energy and expertise.
We need to apply common sense and more analysis to environmental protection - before you stop contractors.
Overall forest policies need to be tidied up to prevent environment organisations from taking VicForest and government to court. Policies let the industry down.
Need to better educate people why forests are important.
More monitoring - rules are there to be followed.
Deer management - forest severely damaged.
Need large scale project.
We need to manage fires better, lower intensity fires based on aboriginal practices, ensure wildlife survive, base practices on cattlemen burning - single ignition points.
Use aerial incendiary on every 3rd ridge each year and then repeat next year low intensity burns on ridges.
Should be landscape based rather than detection based.
Threatened species - Should be landscape based rather than detection based.
Priorities need to change, biodiversity for timber, there needs to be balance of add x hectare for biodiversity to reserve.
We need to take adaptive approach to forest.
Apiary clear felling is terrible for bee keeping.
We have taken Aboriginals out and we need to replace their influence on environment, we need to actively manage.
Planned burns for regeneration (ash forests) speed for putting out fires is poor, some get away due to slow response.
Rechecking of seed coupes for regeneration.
Plantation/regrowth investment needs to be the right tree species in the right place!
Stagger the planting and harvesting over time for plantations, utilise what resource is available regardless of tenure (e.g. National Park), when impacted by wildfire. Revisit areas previously harvested.
Use different forestry practices that have less impact on biodiversity.
Promote the sustainability of the industry and how things grow back.
More staff for forest management and in parks (weed and pest animal management). Confidence for investment essential.
Landscape based system!
Recognise multiple use forest - forest dynamic. Forest are not static over time e.g. Zone changes - Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative informed by RFA.
Communication around RFA needs to be improved, so people understand the ongoing system.
Use of seasonal closures.
More integration/correction with traditional owners.
Cultural use of forest products and education.
Get rid of RFAs and have forestry as just one of the many stakeholders.
Supply of timber responsible to losses due to bushfire.
Where areas taken away for environment region some additional area should be provided elsewhere.
More education on how productive forestry actually works.
Acknowledge that VicForests and industry are providing infrastructure that have multiple uses.
Embrace Australian timber and products.
Transparency of land use so it's clear it will be logged.

Action statements produced quicker after listing.
Comprehensive, Adequate, representative (CAR) system updated in response to findings of Government reviews.
RFAs adaptive.
Action statements are matched to Timber Release Plans (TRPs).
Removal of wood supply commitments in the RFA and a shift to alternative sources of timber.

Q4. How do you use forests in your region?

The source is used to stop harvesting and locking up the bush for recreation.
Not just area available but value in quality.
Accountability for adherence to RFA needs to be strengthened.
Sea to Summit - will impact on area available.
Water (including water used to generate energy for Melbourne).
Recreation.
Certainty needed for industry for them to continue to invest, employ and improve. There are 10,000 jobs in metro Melbourne. Need long lead times.
Biodiversity and water.
Tourism and recreation
More signage and information on where and what is going to be harvested.
20 year rolling RFA will provide the time needed.
Hunting tourism, deer stalking (pest). Logging industry provided roads for access. Camping.
Economy and jobs - insecurity of supply and jobs - access to credit and banks.

Q5. How could the RFAs better provide for multiple forest uses (i.e. recreation, conservation, livelihood and economy)?

Exclude old growth forests full stop. 6.4 million hectares of forest cover on public land. Of that, 348,000 hectares are old growth. That is not much. So old growth should be a 'no go zone'.
RFA should be assessed annually not for '20 years' in advance. in the critical time of climate change, we haven't got the time to be making decisions 20 years in advance.
In this crisis we need 100% more monitoring, community education conserving the role and importance of biodiversity and ecosystems and why they should be protected.
More monitoring and accountability of DELWP contractors. Regulations are being abused.
Why are foresting jobs more important than other jobs, people working in the forest industry should be helped to transition to other forms of work. Transitioning of other jobs have been going on throughout time as we develop, let's not be 'Easter Island' all over again.
Salvage logging/adjust Timber Release Plan (TRP) to include burnt areas.
Forestry is misunderstood and can support a wide range of forest values/outcomes. What can forestry look like in the future to improve social licence.

Extinction should be something front and centre we must not allow our region to increase we must do something now.
The best thing that could be done is to immediately transition to plantation forestry and turn all the forests into national parks or recreation reserves. The economic benefits of tourism and recreation, for outweigh that of forestry. The same can be said in terms of employment - tourism employs for more people and maintains biodiversity.
Support transition out of timber, sooner - the decline has been well known, for a long time.
Factor in the emotional, social and psychological well-being that forests contribute to people who live in forestry areas or who visit/use for recreation.
Need to find a better balance for everyone to do what they want, facilitate recreation access.
There is a need to increase the area accessible to timber harvesting that will improve economy.
If we increase area available to harvesting, this will result in increased intervals with harvest and less impact.
Use local departmental agency knowledge to inform department policy and practices - department should be focused on districts and local skills.
We need to have the RFA inform better and active management of forests.
RFA needs to balance the issue of harvesting and extent of area available. high intensity clear-fell over small area vs lower intensity harvesting over larger state forest area.
Make sure there is forest for industry and for other uses, theme 1 and 2 should be considered together.
Timber is important for carbon storage and is good for building materials, better than concrete and aluminium.
Manage the health of the forest to enable pollination - critical for food security.
Logging roads provide access for other uses including fire suppression and tourism.
Don't lock stuff up and just kick people out of the forest.
Access is critically important for a wide range of uses.
Recognise multiple use of forests in the RFAs.
Better communication about the multiple use of forest.
Zoning system is the key to managing multiple uses.
Need better communication on how forest and used.
Encourage growth of other industries outside of timber to provide people with jobs.
Timber industry needs to become more reliant on plantation.
Consideration of the best way to use timber industry products - what is the best value use of wood products.
Recreation users don't want to lose more forest to logging, continued access, investment in compliance and better education in responsible use of forests.
Better signage of activities that occur and are allowed in different parts of the forest.
More community led multiple forest use.
Put foresters back in the forest. Need to actively manage forests - bushfires etc. Needs to be resources, timber harvesting provides a source of revenue to support this. This would increase carbon storage, ferrel animal control, planned burning, track maintenance, thinning catchments to including water yields, benefit from carbon markets, bushfire first response.
Parks Victoria/FFMVIC forest - not resourced to adequately manage forests and parks. All the money is in fire management - spending millions on aircraft, could be doing more on the ground.
Broken cycle of forest revenues being reinstated in forest management.

20 year rolling RFAs would provide significant times for - forestry industry, to allow investment. Tourism and recreation - more signage and info so communities know what is a productive forest and expected to be harvested, regeneration etc.
Tourism and recreation, more signage and info so communities know what is a productive forest and expected to be harvested, regeneration etc, compromises where visual amenity is important, find other forest resources.
Signage on carbon being stored.
Accessibility. Access tracks, camp grounds, etc.

Q6. What are your views on existing environmental protections afforded across the entire forest estate (including parks, reserves and State forests) through the RFAs?

They are completely inadequate! The model is based on economics and employment first, biodiversity and conservation second.
RFAs need to be brought into the modern extinction crisis and climate change era.
Things have changed drastically from 20 years ago in terms of the multiple threats on flora and fauna.
The public have lost confidence in the enforcement of rules, laws and so-called protections when there are continued breaches by VicForests. Then instead of an apology, they either deny or defend or lie.
Existing protections don't seem to be effective.
Far too much of tree clearing under the guise of 'safety' is carried out. e.g. recent clearing of roadsides into cabbage palms and the clearing carried out on Scriveners Road in the Colquhoun Forests.
Real evidence gets hijacked for different interests. Get a better handle on the validity.
Protection of Leadbeater's and Great Gilder is stopping us for moving ahead, locking area up, we need science.
Forest protection surveys are only looking at planned coupes.
Locking up areas as parks is not good for the forests, high fuel loads are a big risk to biodiversity.
Stem density in stands are too high, we need to manage this and not lock up parks.
Surveys only conducted in area where forest operations occur.
Environmental protection not well managed - reactive not proactive.
Detection based management has resulted in more intensive harvesting in remaining areas.
Lots of forest areas burnt in previous bushfires (whole range of ages). No one has gone back to see how it is coming back and managed appropriately (e.g. Is the regeneration good quality?).
Vic Forests moving towards forest stewardship council (FSC) certification this will lead to less clear-felling and better forest management.
Need to maintain current recreational access.
More information about different status and controls in land tenures e.g. parks next to state forest, General Management Zone (GMZ) versus Special Protection Zone (SPZ). Government doesn't explain this well.

Where is the evaluation of the Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative (CAR) reserves? Are they delivering their purpose? If not, some could be used for industry.
Fire need to consider tolerable fire intervals (based on science) and not just think about only indigenous, or only biodiversity.
No studies done since 1990s, lack of data, community volunteers, lack of resources.
Bushfires - reduction of habitat.
Water-fire, huge impact of water quality.
Value of native forest going up - converting hardwood to softwood plantation, impact on biodiversity.

Q7. How could the environmental protections be improved?

The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conversation Act (EPBC) act needs to be improved so that individual animals or populations of animals e.g. in a small area, are protected from all threats when identified (or small population of flora).
There needs to be biodiversity and conservation heads of departments and officers who are well funded and not in fear of losing their jobs if they speak out.
Place more emphasis on an individual's safety with the individual, rather than carrying our large-scale tree clearing.
More emphasis on Traditional Owners' management methods.
Depends how you define environmental protections - planned burning is an environmental protection, State Government could explain planned burning a lot better, what we do and why we do it, why some places not others.
Consider the dynamic nature of forests.
Better management of regeneration for several years after fires.
Base research in parks not just state forest-based protections on this.
Leadbeater's 200m buffers not 500 if this happens-loss of 200 hectares from harvesting in one place, need it open up equivalent 200 hectares somewhere else
Need to remove feral cats as a significant predator to wildlife, governments should do more about this.
Should do surveys in all areas including reserves - landscape scale.
Decision based on evidence = landscape scale surveys, independent, peer reviewed science.
Forest thinning can contribute to better forest management and fire management.
More compliance officers and greater presence.
Need more investment by Government in forest management.
Need more care and monitoring. Record what is happening in forests and respond to impacts - pests, recreation impacts.
Need to have definitions for high conservation value old growth forests that are matched to each region/locality/Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC).
Forest surveys and monitoring should be ongoing and more extensive.
Areas with low ecological vegetation class EVC representation should have high protection.
Take a landscape approach to protection.
Forest industries should have to go through the same process under Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) as other industries.

Q8. What opportunities could the RFAs provide to support access to and traditional use of forests by Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people?

RFA's could and should, first and foremost seek approval to log on the land of traditional owners. If the Traditional Owners say no, then there should be no logging. Industrial scale logging is the antithesis of an indigenous way of life, as well as the fact that scar or burial trees may be destroyed, and artefacts and remains obliterated by forestry practices.
Communicate more with aboriginal people on how to do fire management better, low intensity.
Need to be careful if aboriginal approach is based on opinion versus fact, has traditional knowledge been lost, who is the right representative.
Need to help local groups with help from groups outside of Gippsland.
Wet Sclerophyll forest not lived in permanently by Traditional Owners - travelled through to high plains.
Use of forests for cultural purposes - forest products and education/cultural awareness, collect for food, bush medicine, industry.
Have people /Traditional Owners come and visit and teach other what they know, how it is valued by Traditional Owners.
Ensure that Traditional Owners have ability to input to the RFA discussion.
Need to ensure partnerships match Traditional Owners way of working and sharing and thinking and take time.
DELWP have designed the RFA process with Commonwealth. Traditional Owners should be a partner in design and input from their own independent organisations.
To acknowledge Traditional Owners as custodians, cultural water, cultural burning.
Agencies working opportunities avail and supporting communities.
Jobs for Traditional Owners.
Enabling model, not a prescriptive one. Intent of government could be stated in the RFA.
Landcare and farming settings agencies have enabled indigenous story contribution adding cultural dimensions.
In QLD indigenous communities are involved on cold burns - leading to great diversity, before and after.
Engage with Traditional Owners, speak to locals, not Melbourne indigenous people.

Q9. 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?

Economic and cultural opportunities would most likely come to traditional owners through tourism. Tourism and logging cannot happily co-exist.
The only way future forest management could be realised in a way that is sympathetic to 'caring for Country' is through aboriginal people being involved in plantation forestry on their lands. Forestry as we now have it, is the opposite of 'caring for Country'.
Actively involve Koori people in land management and apply indigenous knowledge to future forest management.
Re-seeding and replanting could provide employment opportunities Lake Tyers and Lakes Entrance communities.
Should be economic and cultural opportunities for Traditional Owners.
Shared economic values with Traditional Owners - look at models in mining industries. Jobs for Traditional Owners. Involvement in managing forests.
Values include carbon how Traditional Owners can capture benefits of carbon market.
Facilitate Traditional Owner use of forests better.
provide greater role of Traditional Owners in guiding forest management.
Gippsland environment agencies.
Opportunity for indigenous communities for seed collection, identification of culturally significant trees, regeneration - employment opportunities.

Q10. How could the RFAs consider climate change and other large-scale natural disturbances (including bushfires)?

The best way to store carbon and mitigate climate change is to keep old trees in old forests. Universities are publishing reports that prove that logging-regrowth is for more flammable than old-growth forests. Therefore, if governments push for more logging. They are endangering the population more, by increasing the risk of wildfires.
Maintain access in RFA areas for fire protection and fire management after harvesting for multiple uses.
Forest thinning could contribute to better forest management and better fire management.
Revisit coupes and forest areas affected by bushfires to check on regrowth.
Plant right trees in the right area, factoring in changing climate.
Encourage use of timber products to decrease reliance on carbon intensive materials.
Grow more trees to capture more carbon.
Increase forest area to increase forest estate.
Learning from industry. If science fails, we need to learn from history.
Peer reviewed science to input into management practice.
Look to evolutionary histories of species as guidance and evidence of species. Adaptivity to major disturbances e.g. Offspring indicates they are not in possession of evolutionary adaptiveness to massive fire events.
Timber is a sustainable resource.
Bees play important role in pollination, tree growth.

RFA's can be more adaptable to climate change issues.
Reviews needs to consider climate change/disturbance enable change as required.
Timber industry is heavily relied upon for first attack and campaign fire suppression across entire forest state. The summer fire season is increasingly over-lapping with the U.S season. How can DELWP bolster their firefighting capabilities? RFA needs to provide timber industry certainty or DELWP will lose its capability to deploy skilled forest operators.
Bushfires should not fund forest management. Forest management needs re-current, adequate funding irrespective of catastrophic bushfires.
Management in the future needs to value carbon storage as a structure which can be planned for.
Revisit tolerable fire intervals.
Consider what impact bushfires have on whole landscape and impact on all forest values.
Maintain access roads in state parks.
Energy renewable targets - using plantations and regenerating native forests for carbon credits.
Storms effecting buffer zones.
Climate adaption, managing risks, landscape scale management and planning is needed.

Q11. How could the RFA's better address industry sustainability?

Immediately transition to plantation forestry.
Take the reactiveness out of managing forest operations. E.g. micro managing Leadbeater's Possum sightings by buffering and closing coupes is disruptive.
RFA's need to support industry to educate/inform/advocate for the important of cause of timber to both urban and regional communities.
Certainty of timber resource, area for harvest.
Integrated the timber industry with other forest industries.
Apiary supports many other industries and agriculture need to work together.
Flexibility in forest management practices for apiary, native bees have role to play, more research into benefits. Areas of high value and species diversity preserved for apiary.
No net loss of area available for harvest needs to apply. Reviews did not address this issue, better accountability and certainty is required to address this in a timely manner.
Greater clarity in the RFA around responsibilities actions, time frames.
Tighten legislation to avoid lengthy legal cases.
Utilise dangerous tree removal to support industry rather than leaving them there.
RFA's to include scale of area, volume, species and quality specifies for certainty.
Zoning and landscape management improved.
Increase land available and revisit use, because forests are dynamic.
Maintain mosaic pattern rather than concentrating logging in response to detection-based monitoring, rather than landscape based.
Shift to plantation timber industry.
Industry needs to look to alternative wood products and paper sources.
Focusing on value adding of timber products to create more jobs.
Look to parallel industries (dairy) for examples of regional-specific industry and transition.

Fix an allocation order for forestry a supply agreement is critical.
Any allocation of wood volumes in the RFA need to be legally binding.
The RFA need to morph into a principles-based agreement.
There were attempts made 20 years ago, that have not worked so how can erosion of the intent not happen?
Science can discredit the intent of the agreement over time.
Don't advocacy of the timber industry (i.e. between CMA's and government).
Be very clear that industry agreements will be renewed.
Educate people on carbon storage by forests.
Consider engaging forest-based industries to reduce fuel load in state parks i.e. harvesting.
Encourage salvage harvesting (after fires) in water catchments and notional parks.
Access to fire wood.
Biomass hospital is using for energy.
Pellet industry just starting in the area but needs long term supply.

Q12. 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)?

Plantation forestry would mean that international countries would be more likely to BUY our timber because it would then be able to be labelled as sustainably sourced.
Apiary operated best in intact forests, not logging coupes.
The best way to control climate change is to keep old-growth forests in the ground: they retain water or attract water, they store carbon, they cool the atmosphere, they absorb CO2 and produce oxygen.
RFA needs to guarantee supply or you can't encourage investments.
RFAs should not be politically driven. it should be locked for the 20 years.
University level research and development - timber products, education at school level about forestry (regionally based).
Timber Hub is an example of education and training program in schools.
Promotion of wood industry and bee keeping.
RFAs to acknowledge the type of forest industry certification there are differences between forestry stewardship council (FSC) standards in countries a stakeholder's engagement can heavily influence standards and environmental protections.
Need to encourage forest use, timber products and their positive in pace on carbon cycle, and also forest management.
Promote all ecosystem services better, similar to Parks Victoria PV - healthy parks, healthy people.
Multiple use e.g. a road put in for a coupe provides opportunities for access for ecologists, beekeepers, mountain bikes, hikers, skiers.
New uses - consultation with industry to look at alternatives e.g. routes.
Certainty around zoning and volume so that people can invest.
Carbon capture.

More plantation - right species in the right area.
Improve salvage harvesting techniques so that it is done efficiently to maximise its use.
Support for industries other than the forest industry.
support for regional communities through jobs in a diversity of industries.
Better management of forests rather than park closures.
Investment in compliance to ensure continued access.
Greater investment in environmental protection and management.
Recreational opportunities for a greater range of needs.
Better signage to reflect what's allowed.
More DELWP staff in attendance at recreational sites/firewood collection.
More investment in care and protection to allow for multiple use.
Traditional owner forest-based industry/tourism.
Supply chain business are sustained.
What are the 'enablers' for transition?
Transition plans for each region would be necessary.
We need to stop talking about 'transition' and focus on sustainable forest management.
Marketing the renewable nature of timber industries - good biodiversity outcomes. Forest industry is not deforestation. Education to recapture the social science is very important.
Opportunities in firewood industry. Collection, in conjunction with harvesting.
Biomass industry opportunities from residents.
Reliable supply is needed for the renewable energy and pallet industry to grow. an emerging industry.

Q13. 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)?

More effort to eradicate pest animals - more bounties.
Forest fire management needs to be improved - more lineal coupes, thinning back into the forest to create strategic fire.
Too much work rehabilitating breaks - should maintain them.
Need to change the fire model because so many people complain about smoke.
It is proven by the latest science research that logging increases the risk of wildfires, compared to keeping cool with old growth forests intact and in the ground. Therefore, the best way to reduce risk from bushfires is to stop logging.
Access to national park resourced for seed collection in the past.
Reseeding and replanting - particularly after bush fires - could create employment. funding should be automatically provided.
Need to consider the industry with forestry, including fires.
Better explanation to the public on purpose of burning and also forestry.
Build allocation orders into the legislation like Australian Paper legislative allocation.
Potential for a bigger window for prescribed burning, or more resources for burning.

Improve communication on what RFAs cover (state forest not national park) – context.
Use zoning system to drive multiple use of forests.
Multiple use - can have everything on the same areas not distinct zones.
Better consultation across forest users for any new development initiative.
Need to recognise a range of causes of forest change - fire, pests, etc. lots of disturbance, hazardous trees.
Better utilisation of forest resource - hazardous tree removal - utilise the timber.
Improved forest policy so not driven by singular species issues.
A better relationship between DELWP and VicForests with clearer responsibilities.
More economic opportunities for traditional owners in forest management/utilisation/jobs, shared economic value.
A better more transparent forest zoning ledger - changes to zoning and balance between zones.
Improved salvage harvesting - more responsive, identify areas, quicker.
Perverse outcomes - over logging in available areas - not spreading out across the landscape.
Better access to reduce the risk of fire and hence threat to timber resources.
Increase forest estate - spread risk from threats (fire) on values.
Greater emphasis on adaptive management for multiple community needs. E.g. Not just clear fell or lock up.
Scientific evidence versus community needs. Community needs is focussed on perception not evidence.
Greater recognition of historical knowledge.
DELWP reduction burns need to be more focused on low intensity burns versus area targets.
Lack of management of reserves and parks.
Acknowledge everyone's right to be make a living from state forests.
Make larger area available for harvest industry less intensive activity over a greater area.
Consistent management across land tenures, e.g. same approach to fire suppression on both state forest and national parks.
Monitoring. Need information to support adaptive management.
Protecting areas of highest conservation value.
Timber harvesting shouldn't be exempt from undertaking Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process required by other industries.
Ensure the RFA and Vic Forest management system provide equivalent protection as the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) act. If deficient, the EPBC Act should kick in.
Let communities talk about what the values of the forests are (by themselves), not led by Vic forests/Government. Forums are all filtered through a Government lens.
Acknowledge and support/encourage volunteer groups that support forest management (4wd, horse riders, citizen scientists, hub association).
Certainty of supply from the government in the RFAs.
Forestry is not deforestation.
Putting foresters back in the forest to manage it for fire and other resources.
Manage the forest for multiple-uses and find the resources.
Signage of areas where bushfires go through.

Q14. What areas of research would better equip us to sustainably manage Victoria's forests?

After the bush fires Royal Commission of 2009 things said by the then Premier of Victoria that divided rural and local communities and split them into those that wanted to clear everything out of fear to those that wanted to protect the threatened species of flora that we had in our region. Limestone box country with environmental overlays caused so much division. One community group wanted more information so that invited a 'local shire' to come to a meeting to explain, that officer said what they wanted to hear. Noting that 'Olearia Viscoa' was just a daisy bush and the Red Gum plains was just grass. Until this day my community is divided. Most of those that wanted to clear were recent arrivals from Melbourne and feared fire, there should have been community education, but as always nothing gets done.
Fully fund Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) to complete all 'conservation advice' and compliance.
Employ as many biodiversity and conservation officers as needed.
Employ independent researchers to identify threatened species hotspot.
Extend the geography over which habitat and species surveys are undertaken by DELWP.
Invest in jobs in the environment, to undertake surveys and other land management.
Any research should be balance peer reviewed.
Current scientific evidence often advocacy based - need to move to objective.
Landscape approach to research not targeting of harvested areas e.g. current DELWP focus on pre-harvest logging. should be comparative studies in park and reserves.
Greater funding for departments to survey across the landscape and for longer-term studies.
Greater emphasis on controlling pest species esp. feral cats.
Greater investment in silvicultural techniques - not just clear fell move to other prescriptions.
Research and development with a university. Promote forest management among schools with the timber hub, could lead to employment in the forest industry.
Flexibility around burning and research this.
Research on native bees and other species and their impact on forestry.
How effective are the protections in protecting species.
Imported timber needs to be of the same standard as Australian wood.
Scientific, peer reviewed not just one person.
Species research across landscapes not just the logging areas like surveys.
Sustainable yield calculations - volume/quality/species/area.
Carbon capture in native forest logging (life cycle analysis) that goes into forest products.
Plantation utilisation and growth - increase the plantation base on public or private land - identify opportunities.
More research in fire/fire management benefits of thinning forests.
Climate change - species selection for replanting. Carbon benefits of timber products versus alternative (e.g. Concrete).
True value of timber industry - cost/benefit - not stump value but end-use value.
Current decisions are based on 10% of data.
What are the forest values that we're managing for? Needs to be well defined.
Alternative wood products (e.g. value-added industries from plantation timbers).
Alternative paper fibres e.g. Bamboo, hemp, wheat, rice.
Growth opportunities for other forest-based industries - transition from native forests.
Innovative approaches to behaviour change in responsible use of forests, e.g. education.
Investment in Traditional Owner values and traditional ecological knowledge (in addition to western science).

Evolution of Comprehensive Adequate Representative (CAR) system.
Need to invest in science behind planned burning (tolerable fire intervals).
Further resource for monitoring across the landscape (not just logging coupes) should also be independent assessment.
Research into use of biomass - how much to leave behind at the site vs how much can be used for other uses.
Consider use of biomass to power harvesting sites.
Positive messages about the forest industry.
Research projects, cultural burning, cultural forest management, to improve forest health monitoring evaluation.

Q15. How could the RFA monitoring, review (including the five-yearly reviews) and reporting arrangements be improved?

The Gippsland Lakes are deprived of hundreds of much of its fresh water due to the Thompson Dam delivering water to Melbourne. Therefore, it really hurts and insults us when we see the catchment of the Thompson river is being mismanaged by logging the catchment.
Accountability of contractors must be monitored as so very often over the years, without proper monitoring (occurs due to cutbacks) we are seeing more and more destruction from: going beyond buffer zones, burning on high wind days, causing fires to escape and damage eco systems.
Lack of properly training jobs e.g. forestry people making decisions over biodiversity decision.
Lack of education of the public so that the pressure and divisions do not occur in the community whereby conversations are not targeted by uninformed members of the public.
There needs to be independent monitoring and reviews: not one branch of government monitoring another branch. Monitors should be truly independent. In Victoria, DELWP have not protected listed threatened species from VicForests because DELWP is stacked with 'forestry' trained managers, not with biodiversity and conservation managers.
Reviews needs to be up-to-date in terms of carbon storage, climate change and extinction.
Flora and fauna monitoring needs to be rigorous and across all tenures. Should be focusing on all species not just Leadbeater's Possum.
Areas of forest were lost due to late reviews.
No net loss of area and this should be reviewed.
Need to be on time – governments.
Key indicators - how many people are using the forest, area available for harvesting, reporting on species and any changes.
Surveys need to be more holistic not targeted in logging areas - extend more broadly across the landscape.
Transparency of the zoning ledger - movement of land into Special Protection Zone (SPZ) and balance.
Regeneration/regrowth assessments in logging coupes burnt by wildfire. Reforestation in fire recovery.
Decision based on fact not weight of opinion.
Ongoing monitoring of forests for care and protection. E.g. Pests, compliance/illegal activity - firewood collection.
More investment by Government in forest care and protection (DELWP compliance officers need to be seen).
Regular review of survey methods for threatened species, old growth etc.
Review definition of old growth, noting differences in different EVCs.
Identify areas of highest biodiversity value to include in Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative (CAR) reserve system.
Ongoing monitoring and investment throughout duration of RFA.

Monitoring pre and post logging to understand the impacts of timber harvesting on ecosystems.
Stronger alignment between State of Forests Report (SOFR) and RFA review process.
Greater clarity on roles and responsibilities.
Better signage of forests available for operation and harvesting records to improve awareness in community. Also provide information on carbon storage over that time.
Engage Traditional owners in managing forest areas and forest management planning need attention to cultural values.
Need to look at fragmented protected areas established through prescription - are these areas adequate to protect species.
Need to look at all forest values in forest management planning.
Need to retain access tracks to enable access for fire management and other purpose.
State Forest Resource Inventory (SFRI) and biodiversity plots aerial photography. Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) were everywhere in the forests - There's not data to support sustainable yield calculations.
Lack of trust in DELWP.
Parks Vic don't survey and know about the natural values about the estate they manage.
Set and forget doesn't work.

Other Comments/Concerns

A commitment from government to protect the Victorian timber industry by legislating the allocation order which sets the available area in legislation.
Forest thinning will help improve outcomes in forest health and bushfire management.
Why has our forest policy let our industry down with so many court cases?
Tell the industry what the long-term plans are.
Politicians seem disconnected from the reality in our forests, come and see what is being lost.
Many questions about planned burns in East Gippsland and Gippsland.
Timing of drop-in sessions doesn't suit people who work or look after families.
Single point of reference of local environment groups.
Not enough resources going into park and forest management especially in East Gippsland - all the focus shouldn't be on parks with visitor numbers.
Need more opportunities to have conservation.
This is a generational opportunity - in some ways Gippsland is ready and, in some ways, not.
Australian government community development process going on for Cann River district, Shire leading - will come to Council later this year.
Great opportunities with the Sea to Summit trail if locals are involved and reap the benefits.
Locking up forests in parks is not the answer.
What are we going to do for employment and economic activity?
One of the biggest things to help with forest health and biodiversity is thinning the forest. Could have saw logs but less clear fell this would also mean less fire used for regeneration.
Proud of the industry, true foresters came for and want to protect the forest.
If there is going to be a change then tell us when it is.
Not enough communication on planned burns and not enough information given.

Concern about potential conflict of interest in DELWP.
Going overboard with 'safety' - removing trees unnecessarily.
Where is science? seeing huge loss if forest frame.
What is VicForests power? All they do its harvest, who checks what they do?
Crops on flat country is not good, poor soil.
Improved consultation with industry knowledge base on forestry practices.
Salvage burnt timber and regrowth from national parks should be considered (1939).
people do not accept the long time that it takes for trees to grow back.
Trust in science - who do we believe.
\$110 million for plantations - won't happen soon - poor land, only good pine.
Don't lock up more country before we can manage it better.
Forestry operators have good experience and all skills to firefighting.
Improve forest health and harvesting - large bush fires areas have not had adequate regrowth. No one went back to monitor the regrowth and make sure the regeneration is up to standard.
Keeping access roads open to assist in fire management.
Bill Jackson report based on Vic forest receipts. Needs to capture also more comprehensive value of the industry.
Decisions around the RFA should be based on fact rather than emotion.
Better working relationship between VicForest and DELWP, in support of timber industry needs.
Fire management in adjacent parks sustained.
Recognise VicForest is changing practices for forest stewardship council (FSC) certification.
Review the wood pulp agreement act.
Federal government should be able to intervene in cases.
Community led engagement multiple forest use - local communities need a forum.
Understand impacts (economically) of transition from native forests to plantations.
How are alpine resorts considered in the RFAs?
Timber worth 3.5% of Wellington Shire regional council but would be worth 10% if not for major gas plant. \$80m East Gippsland Shire (2.1%) - Forestry, logging and direct businesses (To contractors, not down to mechanics).
Need to consider downstream impacts from reductions in native forests timber harvesting.
Importance of native forest industry from economic health of regions (e.g. after Hazelwood closure).
East Gippsland RFA was intended to increase tourism.
Tourism provides passive surveillance, it's not an either-or for tourism and forestry.
Provide resources for resending/regenerating especially areas not covered by VicForests or industry, from pre-VicForests times.

