

Tuesday 25th June 2019

Attended RFA meeting in Heyfield on behalf of the Gippsland Apiarists Association

At my table were [REDACTED] from Wellington shire, [REDACTED] two other government representatives [REDACTED] from Australian Paper and a number of people from the ASH mill in Heyfield. I was the only non government person at that table not employed in the timber industry.

The loss of sawmills, the resulting loss of employment and effects on communities was discussed.

There seemed to be no considerations that export and domestic woodchipping could be a factor in the loss of resource available to sawmills. When I raised this I was even advised by one ASH worker that woodchips were usually taken from the branches and heads of trees.

A number of issues discussed, there seemed a consensus amongst the timber industry employees that they should be allowed access to the same volumes of timber resource that they have traditionally have had access to. They saw the threat to their future was solely denial of access for reasons such as increased areas of National Parks and alienation of resource as a result of discoveries of Leadbeaters possums.

At the end of the meeting we had a bite to eat and I said to [REDACTED] that 80 year old mountain ash stands would produce very few if any low grade logs used for chipping, he replied with words to the effect that stands of 80 year old mountain ash trees had virtually no chip logs. I asked him what the volume of timber from the 39 regrowth ash was going to pulp and he told me that he didn't know, he advised that I could find out from the Annual Reports of Vicforest on their website.