



Fairy Waxflower
Philotheca verrucosa

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Submission: Western Victoria RFA

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club oppose any continuation of the Western Victoria Regional Forest Agreement (RFA).

The Western Victoria RFA should be cancelled immediately and be removed from the Forest Modernisation Project process occurring across other RFA regions in Victoria.

There is no sound economic justification for modernising the Western Victoria RFA, Bendigo Field Naturalists Club oppose government subsidies for forestry industries.

All native forest areas remaining within the Western Victoria RFA require urgent formal protection within the protected area reserve system (National Park, Regional Park, or other Conservation Reserve status).

Commercial and industrial forestry is ecologically unsustainable within the forest types represented in the Western Victoria RFA, logging in this region over past decades has been directly responsible for extensive biodiversity decline.

Commercial and industrial forestry within the Western Victoria RFA directly contravenes the purpose, aims, and merit of the Victorian Governments “Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037” strategy.

Future forest recovery from commercial and industrial forest coupes will not be feasible under current impacts and trajectories of climate change.

All remaining native forest areas must be protected and managed to allow maximum capacity for natural adaptation to the changed climate conditions currently being experienced and further changes as predicted to occur.

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club strongly support increased Government Funding to *at least* 1% of the annual Victorian State Budget for allocation to direct conservation management of protected areas. Other management within protected areas such as road maintenance, infrastructure repair or establishment should be funded from alternative budget streams. All protected areas require higher levels of on-ground staffing for compliance and enforcement.

Sincerely,

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club