



How can we protect and improve our forests for all Victorians?

Old-growth forests are a crucial and limited resource that cannot be recovered in our lifetime once lost. Formally recognise that forests provide a range of natural and cultural heritage values and ecosystem services, including habitat, carbon storage and clean water, which must not be compromised by short-term employment goals.

Ensure transition plans for communities currently reliant on unsustainable forestry, and that the logging industry is not entitled to special exceptions through Regional Forest Agreements that compromise our flora, fauna, climate and waterways (with impacts well beyond the forest boundaries). Protect native forests from logging, including through the creation of the Great National Forest and Emerald Link as strongly endorsed by diverse sectors and groups (<https://www.greatforestnationalpark.com.au/support.html>). Areas of permitted, farmed forestry must be clearly demarcated in detailed maps that prevent the ambiguity defense claimed by VicForest for logging illegal areas. In a state who has forest ecosystems rated 'critically endangered' under IUCN standards, state-endorsed forestry that fails Forest Stewardship Council certification and relies on legal exemptions via RFAs is unacceptable.

Victoria is becoming a leader in transitioning coal-based communities to renewables communities - we need similar rapid transition plans to assist communities while taking urgent action to protect our native forests. This will end up win-win for people and the environment -- Victoria's proposed Great Forest National Park could draw almost 380,000 extra visitors a year to the Central Highlands, add \$71 million annually to the local economy and generate 750 jobs with a little private investment, according to a 2018 report by the Nous Group.

What could be done to alleviate your concerns and improve the things you most value about our forests?

Strongest possible protection of old-growth forests and the ecosystem services they provide, including expansion of State/National Forests and application of EPBC Act 1999 even for forests without formal 'significance' designations.

What benefits do you want future generations to gain or enjoy from Victoria's forests?

Victoria's native forests offer cultural and natural heritage that extends backwards long before European settlement. Future generations should be able to enjoy this cultural and natural heritage, to see iconic and healthy old-growth forests, their healthy population of faunal residents, and to benefit from the cooling, carbon storage and clean water services that are co-benefits of protected native forests.

Choose one or more of the images below which represent your vision for the future of our forests; and then, inspired by the image(s), please write your vision in words.

[NOTE: the image feature was unable to be copied into this document]

We envision healthy, thriving forest ecosystems with expanded National Parklands that benefit all Victorians through Indigenous cultural significance, ecosystem services and access points for recreation and wellbeing. (Presently 90% of Melbourne's water consumption is through embodied usages, which includes the many industries that rely on clean water: wineries and breweries, farms, tourism and recreation.)

We envision Victorian logging industry being rapidly transitioned into transparent, legal and sustainable alternative materials and locations, and urgent protections for the flora, fauna, Traditional Owners and ecosystem services being implemented. We envision a climate-resilient future, celebrating our iconic forests, where positive government-industry-community collaborations mean that no longer are any native ecosystems or native species rated as endangered.

How do you see your role in future forest management?

Greater Melbourne (indeed all Victorians) rely on healthy forests for clean air, clean water and stable climate. Community, researchers and environment groups are already quite knowledgeable about the ecological and legal issues and opportunities involved in forest protection and have been very professional and articulate about these concerns over the past decade, including campaigns for the Great Forest National Park and Emerald Link.

As a representative of Port Phillip EcoCentre, my role will continue to be using evidence-based advocacy to request that Victorian native forests (and their wildlife and eco-services) are protected, to provide relevant advice to the government supporting this position, and to create curriculum to educate environmental citizens who do their complementary parts to celebrate Victoria's unique landscapes and support forest protection - including, where appropriate, consumer choices to avoid unethical and unsustainable products.

What are we currently doing well, regarding forest management in Victoria?

[we only ticked]

Providing Victorian communities with an opportunity to have their say

Thank you for the opportunity for Victorians to have our say. We do acknowledge that many Victorians and at least 30 environmental groups have had well-researched and broadly shared positions since at least 2014, and that having our say and seeing that reflected back to us by Victorian Government practice is not the same thing.

What could be done to alleviate your concerns and improve the things you most value about our forests?

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Please tick all relevant boxes.

- Stronger focus on biodiversity conservation
- Stronger focus on the health and structure of our forests
- Stronger focus on reducing risk of bushfire
- Improved protection of ecosystem services
- More or different opportunities for people to appreciate and connect with nature
- Prioritising traditional, heritage and/or cultural values and activities
- More or different opportunities for recreational use and/or tourism activities
- More or different opportunities for jobs, income and economic benefits from timber and wood products
- More or different opportunities for jobs, income and economic benefits from non-timber forest industries such as tourism and beekeeping
- Increased opportunities for Traditional Owners to manage our forests
- Improving opportunities to access the natural resources our forests produce such as firewood
- Victorian communities having more say regarding forest management
- Other (please specify)

Other: Strongest possible protection of old-growth forests and the ecosystem services they provide, including expansion of State/National Forests and application of EPBC Act 1999 even for forests without formal 'significance' designations.

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