

30th June 2019

Modernisation of the Victorian Regional Forest Agreements

Dear sir/madam

While I have been aware of this issue I have just been made aware of the review and that submissions close today.

I therefore in summary note that the RFAs:

- are not responsible for the bulk of Victoria's reserve system
- ignore key criteria in national agreed policy for formal protection
- are a block to better protection and new national parks
- ignore ecological criteria are outdated and inconsistent
- review fails to recognise that there are still significant gaps in Victoria's reserve system
- ignore climate change implications
- ignore bushfire impacts
- ignore other forest value

I note Section 4 of the Independent Consultation Paper suggests that a new vision for managing Victoria's forests should seek to:

"Encourage a coordinated, proactive and transparent approach to involving local communities in forest management issues." I take a little offence at this. The public forests of Victoria belong to all Victorians, who should be allowed to have a say in their management. Many people who are not local also have an interest in, and ownership of, our forests; this is a narrow and poorly defined objective.

"Build resilience of Victoria's forests to climate change and other large-scale disturbances." Focus should be reducing disturbance. Fire and logging are currently very large disturbances.

"Consider all public forests." The RFA process should have nothing to do with all public forests. They have had little impact in creating new conservation reserves. If they are to exist at all they should be constrained to deal with production forest only.

Forest should be managed for multiple values, which could be done without RFAs like in many other parts of the state. It is astonishing in this day and age that native forest logging industry get special treatment and exemptions from national environmental laws.

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