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As a young person (32 years of age) I am writing to show my support for cancelling the Western RFA, so that national environmental laws will apply to protect threatened species and habitats in the west of Victoria so future generations, including my children and grandchildren, can enjoy them. I believe it's ludicrous to overlook these important national laws for the sake of a logging industry which is unprofitable and small in size.

The west of the state represents the most heavily cleared area of Victoria, so the remaining uncleared bush is especially valuable and must not be further damaged and fragmented. I have spent much time in the state forests in the west of Victoria, which are beautiful and offer environmental assets that can be enjoyed and should be promoted for eco-tourism purposes providing jobs that way, rather than logging which only offers short term employment. Once the trees are cleared for unprofitable logging activities these areas and species never fully recover.

The area that the Western RFA encompasses is an area rich in threatened species and endangered habitats. It seems obvious that habitats which support threatened species must be protected, otherwise we are essentially selling off these natural wonders for the sake of short term gains. Once these species and ecosystems are destroyed, they cannot be recovered. Many of these species are already on the brink of further decline, so additional extraction and forestry will not be without consequence.

The Western RFA is almost 20 years old and is outdated and obsolete. It has not delivered a comprehensive protected area system in the west, and the ecological criteria used in the RFA are out of date and not consistent with other agreements and strategies which are now at play. A 2010 independent review recommended that it should be cancelled, and I support this finding. As a young person, if agreements such as the Western RFA are allowed to continue – which is not in the public interest, only the forestry industry – it will only further increase my disillusionment with the government. It seems in so many cases taxpayer dollars aren't used in the public interest.

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