

Future of our Forests

Feedback Report - Phase 1 Engagement
December 2018 - March 2019



Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.



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Executive Summary

Victoria's public forests are valuable and important to Victorian communities. Forests provide Victorian communities with a broad range of uses and values that include clean water and air, grand old trees, biodiversity conservation, recreation and connection with nature, and jobs and economic opportunities. We need to manage Victoria's forests for multiple values and uses so that future generations can enjoy and use forests as we do today.

The connection that Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities have with Country is core to their culture and wellbeing. Recognising the unique ability of Traditional Owners to care for Country, and the rights of Traditional Owners, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is building and formalising its partnerships with Traditional Owners as key to reforming future forest management.

Partnership with Traditional Owners during and beyond this reform program will ensure feedback from the Victorian public on the future of our forests is considered in the context of traditional knowledge, contemporary and emerging science, and identified community values.

From December 2018 to March 2019 we asked what Victorians value most about their forest through a number of channels including an online survey, drop in sessions and workshops throughout Victoria. These engagement activities undertaken will inform a vision for the management of public native forests, modernisation of the Victorian Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs), a state forest management strategy and the design of a new integrated forest and fire management planning framework.

Many contributions have been heard and considered and what is strongly expressed is that forests are highly valued for a multitude of reasons. While some of these aspirations may appear to be contradictory, they provide some guidance on the approach that Victorians want to see considered as we reform Victoria's forest management system. People want to see the forests protected and at the same time want to interact directly with them in a range of ways.

Phase One Engagement for the Future of our Forest program aimed to understand the breadth and depth of views held by Victorians on forests and forest management, including how people currently use forests, what they value and see as a priority to manage going forward.

It is important to note that the engagement process has attempted to encourage responses from and conversations with people from all over Victoria, people of all interests, backgrounds, ages, cultures and abilities. This does not mean the engagement results are representative of any specific demographic in Victoria. It simply means the process aimed to involve as many Victorians as possible with a range of viewpoints and interests. This report reflects the views and responses received from those who contributed.

Key Findings

Several common themes of high importance to Victorians emerged through the consultation: the protection of forests and biodiversity; consideration of the impacts of climate change; and a desire to connect with nature and enjoy access to recreation in forests.

Victoria's forests are valued for their beauty and biodiversity, and it is important that the benefits people gain from forests are preserved for future generations. The responses captured recognised the contribution of forests to providing clean water and mitigating the impacts of climate change. It was also highlighted that forests should be protected for native flora and fauna to thrive. The role of Traditional Owners was recognised and respondents want the heritage and cultural values of forests protected.

Interactions with the forest are highly valued and respondents want this to continue into the future. People want to be able to access forests for recreation including bushwalking, camping, birdwatching, horse riding and four-wheel driving, amongst other pursuits. They primarily want this access to have minimal impact on forests. A high value was placed on the experience of being in a forest and the benefits of this for mental health and wellbeing.

The consultation shows that respondents value Traditional Owner involvement in future forest management. Participants in the Youth Forest Symposium were vocal about listening to and respecting the rights and knowledge of Traditional Owners in protecting forest ecosystems.

Regional respondents displayed a higher concern about maintaining jobs and economic opportunities provided by forests. For example, when asked '*How the forest should be managed*', people living in regional areas rated jobs and economic opportunities more highly than people living in the Metropolitan Melbourne area.

Most respondents believed that timber harvesting of native forest should be stopped and there should be a shift towards the production of wood products from plantation forests.

Climate change was also a major concern for respondents, especially among respondents aged 30 years or younger. When asked '*What forest should be managed for*', mitigating climate change was ranked in the top four values for forest management. However, when asked '*What are we doing well regarding forest management*', only 9% believed that current management is adaptive to a changing environment, climate and major bushfires.

Respondents highly value Victoria's forests and seek a stronger voice in future forest management decisions.

Infographic summary



Snap Shot



**2,824 people
participated
in the online
survey**



**14 written
submissions**

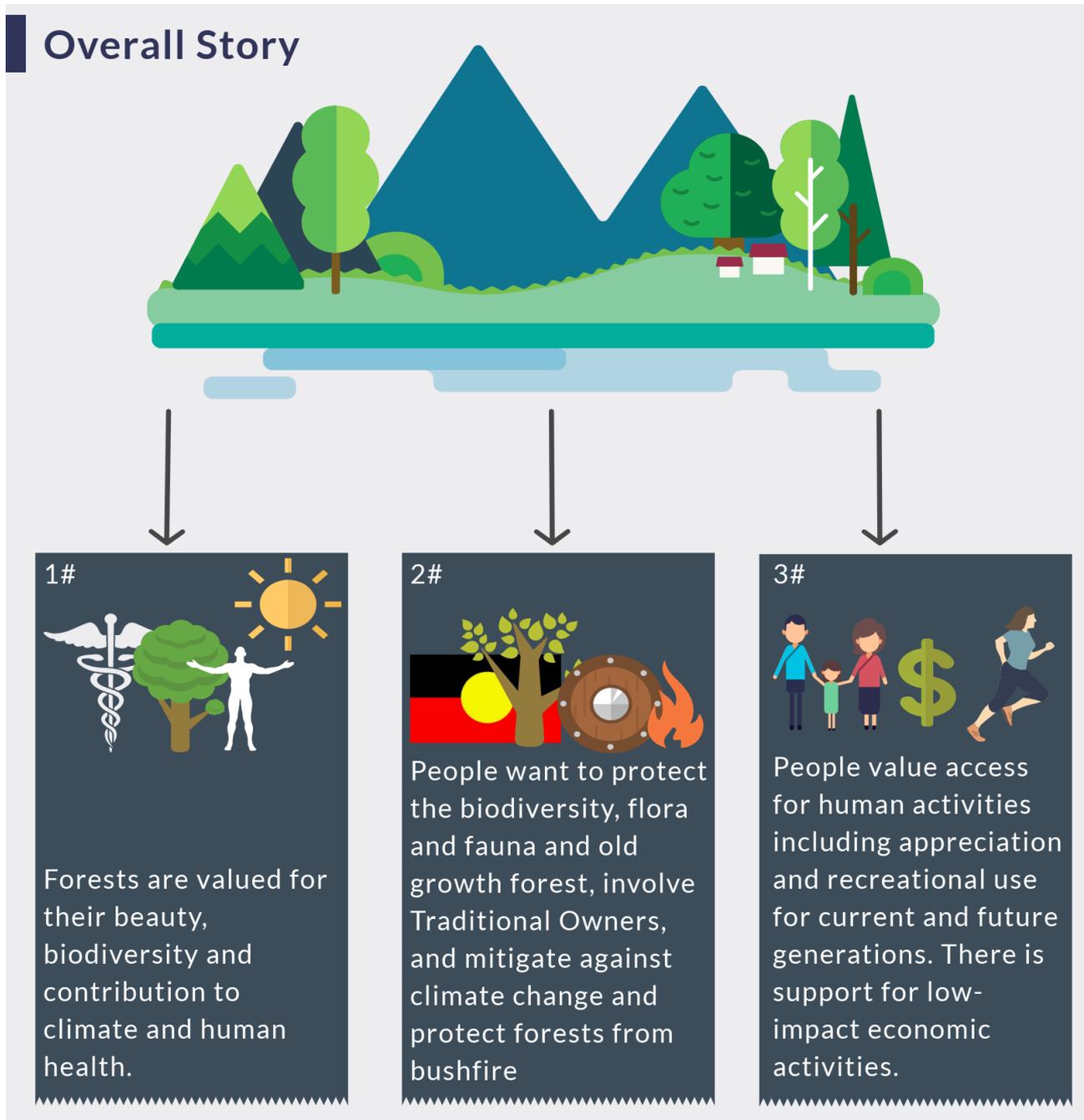


**More than
120 face to
face events
involving
over 2000
participants**



**Youth Forest Symposium
had 49 youth participants
from 22 organisations**

Overall Story



Introduction

Background

Victoria's public forests are valuable and important to Victorian communities. Forests provide Victorian communities with a broad range of uses and values that include clean water and air, grand old trees, biodiversity conservation, recreation and connection with nature, and jobs and economic opportunities. The connection that Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities have with Country is core to their culture and wellbeing.

We need to manage our forests for multiple values and uses so that future generations can enjoy and use forests as we do today.

The Victorian Government has embarked on a major program to modernise how our forest are managed and ensure future forest management delivers the highest and best value uses for the Victorian community.

To achieve this, it is essential that the forest modernisation process is underpinned by Traditional Owner partnership and knowledge; robust, contemporary science; and understanding of community needs and aspirations for Victoria's forests.

Running parallel to community engagement activities, an independent Scientific Advisory Panel has also been appointed to provide science-based advice to Government. This will inform the modernisation of the Victorian RFAs and the design of a contemporary forest management system that is resilient and adaptive to a changing climate and associated management challenges.

Traditional Owner Partnerships

The current program of forest management reform underway in Victoria values the unique ability of Victoria's Traditional Owners to care for Country. It recognises the deep spiritual connection Traditional Owners have with Country and their role as partners in land management.

The government is working with Traditional Owners to support the protection of Country, maintain spiritual and cultural practices, and recognise the broader aspirations of Traditional Owners consistent with the journey towards self-determination.

The outcomes of this engagement will be shared with our Traditional Owner partners as an important input to shaping the future management of our forests.

Engagement Report

Purpose

The purpose of the engagement on the Future of our Forests program is to deliver a comprehensive, genuine and inclusive engagement process through which the diverse values and uses of Victoria's forests are identified, understood and used to shape the modernisation of Victoria's Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) and forest management system.

Phase One Engagement

Phase One Engagement incorporated community and stakeholder engagement from 1 December 2018 – 31 March 2019 and included:

1. An online survey on the Engage Victoria Platform (20 December 2018– 31 March 2019)
2. Workshops and drop in sessions (January 2019 – March 2019)
3. A Youth Forests Symposium for young people aged 10-25 years across Victoria (28 March 2019)
4. Written submissions received through the program email address (December 2018 – March 2019)

The engagement activities above will inform the vision for the management of public native forests, the modernisation of the Victorian RFAs, the State forest management strategy and the design of a new integrated forest and fire management planning framework. Engagement activities, events and the survey were promoted through multiple channels including social media, the Future of Forests website and newsletter, at community events, at stakeholder meetings and advertised through a variety of media channels.

Engagement snapshot

Survey	2,824 completed surveys
Face to face engagement	126 events Grampians and Barwon South West (30), Gippsland (37), Hume (24), Loddon Mallee (16) and Metropolitan Melbourne (19)
Youth Forest Symposium	49 youth participants from 22 organisations
Written submissions	14 written submissions

Methodology

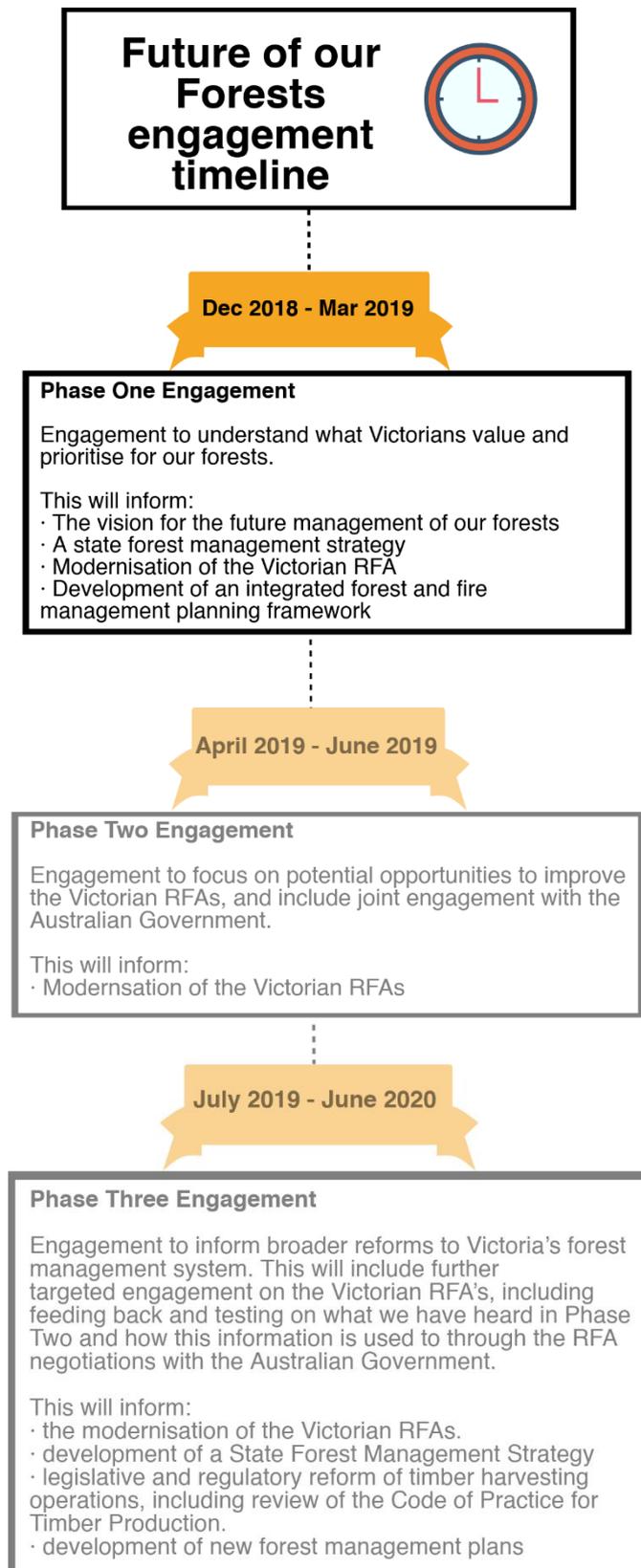
Phase One Engagement for the Future of our Forests program aimed to understand the breadth and depth of views held by Victorians on forests and forest management, including how people currently use forests, what they value and what they see as a priority to manage going forward. The results have been analysed and are contained in this report categorised into key themes captured through all contributions. Where possible, data is displayed visually. It is important to recognise that some themes were discussed more often than others, responses were also analysed based on geographic location, and that where possible a range of viewpoints were sought. Regional summary reports are also available.

A qualitative data analysis tool (Converlens) was used to analyse and theme answers to open-ended questions from the survey and face to face events to draw out key themes raised by participants. It looked for the most commonly used words and collections of words in each comment, which helped identify the common themes for each response.

For the closed survey questions two types of questions were used, ranking and checkbox style questions. For the ranking questions respondents had 10 items to rank, with 1 being highest priority and 10 being the lowest priority. The average ranking was calculated for each answer choice and determined which answer choice was most preferred overall. The answer choice with the largest average ranking is the most preferred choice from the people who responded. The checkbox question let respondents select multiple answers from a defined list of choices. The percentage was calculated based on how many people answered the question.

It is important to note that the feedback captured in this report only reflects the views of those people who participated in the Phase One Engagement. To minimise bias in the results, the online survey was open to all Victorians for over 3 months and advertised through a variety of channels. Face to face workshops across regional Victoria were used to complement the online engagement, and a youth symposium held to target the youth voice. A data analysis tool was used to analyse the results to ensure the results were objectively assessed and reported.

Project timeline

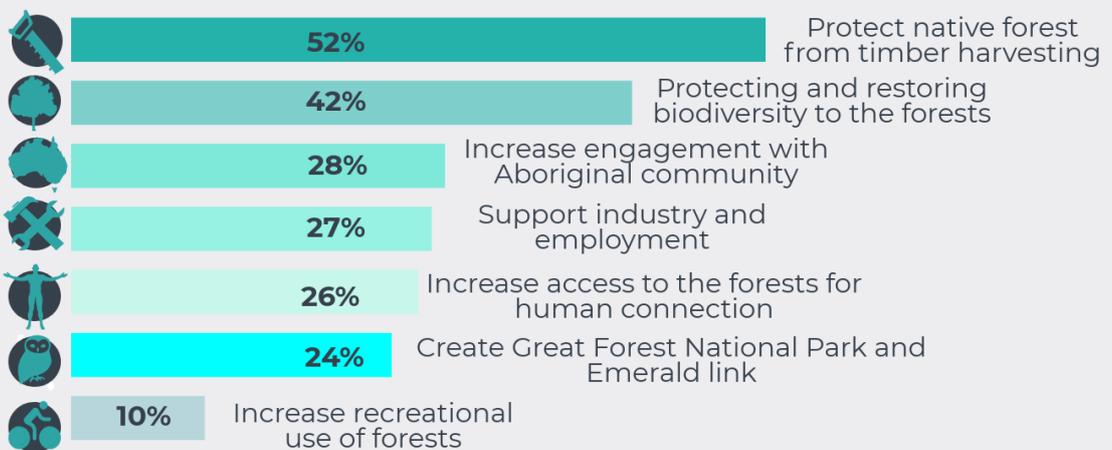


Survey feedback

Infographic summary

Survey results summary

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



When asked about how to protect and improve the forests for all Victorians, major themes that emerged were protection of forests and their biodiversity, heritage and culture, supporting industry and employment, and providing for human connection and recreation.

Question 1 Quotes:

"Forests are critical to the production of good air quality, the mental and physical wellbeing of the community and the conservation of biodiversity in the state. Forests should be viewed as a critical component of Victoria's ecosystem and therefore protected and enhanced as a priority."

"Respect the Traditional Owners and caretakers of the land, protect and mark sacred sites and explain why certain areas may be off-limits."

"Support endeavours such as the Emerald Link and the Great Forest National Park, providing jobs in tourism and protecting our native resources for generations to come."

Survey results summary

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



Respondents were asked about the benefits future generations might gain or enjoy from Victoria's forests. Here there was a strong theme of the purity of nature and the opportunities it offers. Supporting this were themes of maintaining healthy flora and fauna and protecting water and climate, followed by providing access for recreation and sustainable diverse use.

Question 2 Quotes:

"To enjoy the ecosystem services of the forests such as clean air, fresh water and carbon storage, to enjoy the survival of endangered species protected by the forests, the calm and pristine environment and the knowledge that it will thrive into the future."

"I want my children and grandchildren to be able to experience the unique wildlife that the forests are home to and to be able to see the wonderful old trees."

"The benefits that all generations should have from our forests, is the ability to access the forest to undertake outdoor activities which they enjoy."

Survey results summary

What should our forests be managed for?

01



**Conserving
plants and
animals**

02



**Maintaining
water and
catchment
health**

03



**Maintaining
natural
landscapes**

When asked what forests should be managed for, conserving plants and animals was the strongest theme, followed by support for maintaining water and catchment health and maintaining natural landscapes

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

01



**Stronger
focus on
biodiversity
conservation**

02



**Stronger
focus on the
health and
structure of
our forests**

03



**Improved
protection of
ecosystem
services**

Respondents were asked what could be done to alleviate their concerns and improve the things they most valued about forests. Here, people suggested a stronger focus on health and biodiversity in forests, protection of ecosystems and more opportunities to appreciate and connect with nature. Support was also offered for involvement by Traditional Owners and prioritising traditional heritage and cultural values. Economic and tourism opportunities were also mentioned.

Summary of survey results

Introduction

An online survey titled 'Future of our Forests' was developed to hear what communities value about forests, how they use forests and what they want to see from Victoria's forests in the future.

The survey was available through the Engage Victoria platform (www.engage.vic.gov.au) from 20 December 2018 to 31 March 2019. There were 12,859 visitors to the page resulting in 2,824 survey responses received. A majority of participants (52.8%) were between 40 and 64 years of age and a majority were located within the Metropolitan Melbourne region (58.2%).

Key results from the survey:

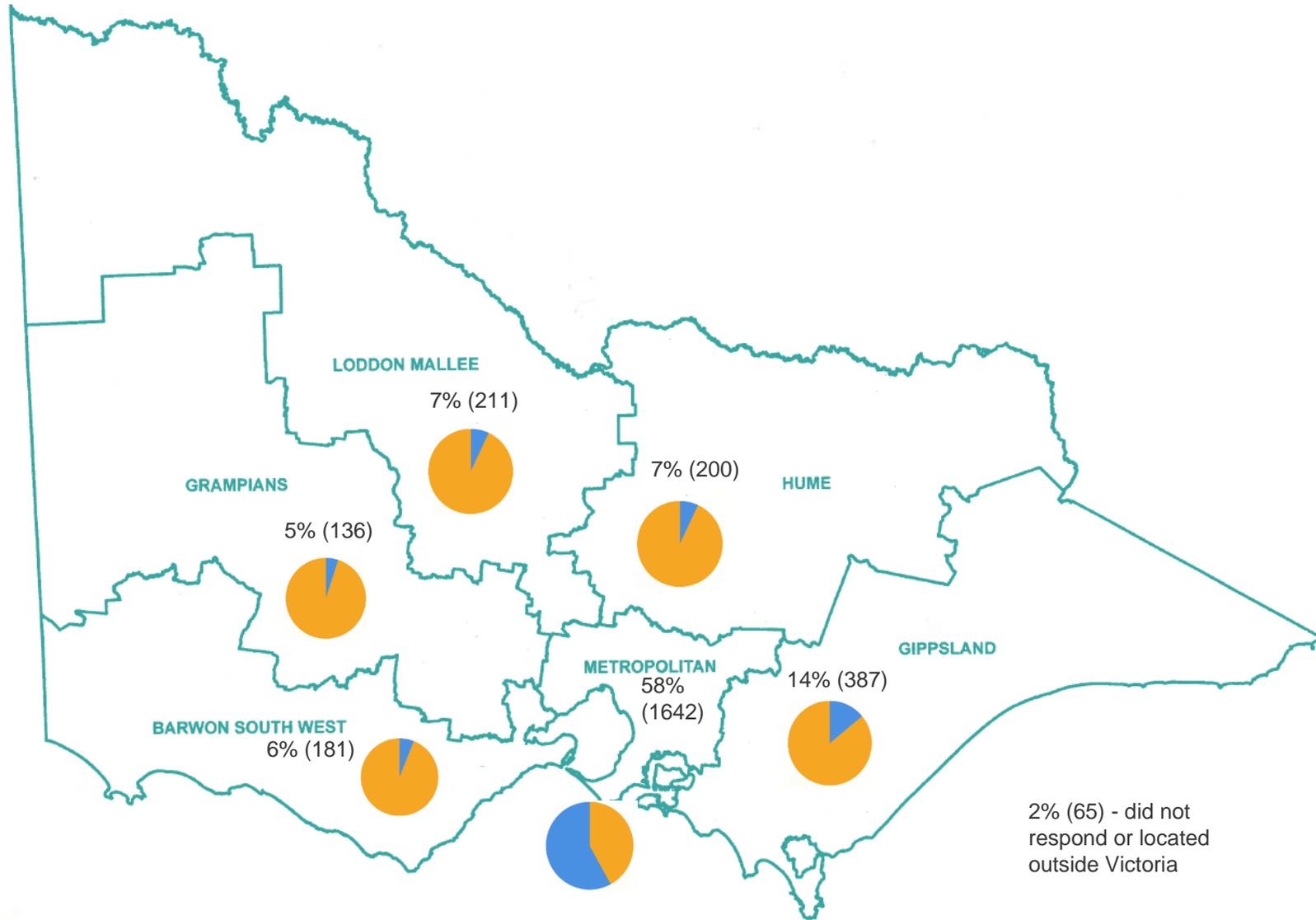
- Protection of forests and biodiversity was paramount. When asked '*How can we protect and improve forests for all Victorians*', respondents indicated that it was most important to *protect native forests from timber harvesting* (52%) followed by *biodiversity protection and restoration* (42%). The remaining themes were *increase engagement with Aboriginal community* (28%), *support industry and employment* (27%), *increase access to the forests for human connection* (26%), *create the Great Forest National Park and Emerald Link* (24%) and *increase recreational use of forests* (10%).
- Forest management should deliver greater protection of forests. *Conserving plants and animals, maintaining water and catchment health, maintaining natural landscapes, and storing carbon and mitigating climate change* were ranked the top four values for forest management from respondents. However, there is still a proportion of people (18%) who regard *jobs and economic benefits* as an important aspect to be managed for.
- When asked '*What are we currently doing well regarding forest management in Victoria*', most respondents answered *providing access and facilities for activities they enjoy* (55.5%). A little over a quarter of respondents, rated *providing Victorian communities with an opportunity to have their say* (33.3%) as something that is being done well. Followed by *managing bushfire risk and/or fuel loads* (21.5%) and *protection of our flora and fauna* (20.7%). Only 9.1% of respondents believed the forests were being *adaptively managed to effectively respond to a changing climate and major bushfires*.
- When asked '*What could be done to alleviate concerns and improve the things most valued about forests in Victoria*', the majority of respondents (73%) said *stronger focus on biodiversity conservation* followed by *stronger focus on the health and structure of our forests* (71%) and *improved protection of ecosystem services* (67%). These strongly supported statements are consistent with the other questions, rating the *health and biodiversity of the forests* as most important.

Key demographics

Responses to the survey were received with a broad representation across all age groups. The intention was to encourage as many people as possible to respond to the survey. Of the respondents who completed the demographic questions the majority were Metropolitan Melbourne residents (58.2%) compared to 41.8% of regional residents. The age structure shows the majority of respondents are age between 30-59 years old (58.7%) followed by 60+ (28.6%) and under 30 years of age (12.7%). Only 2.1% of respondents identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Key demographics	2019 Survey respondents	
	%	Number
Gender		
Female	48.4%	1291
Male	50.1%	1337
Other identity	1.5%	40
Age Structure		
Under 9	0.1%	2
10-14	0.1%	3
15-19	1.0%	27
20-24	3.8%	99
25-29	7.6%	196
30-34	8.2%	211
35-39	8.5%	220
40-44	10.3%	265
45-49	9.6%	248
50-54	10.5%	271
55-59	11.7%	301
60-64	10.7%	275
65-69	9.2%	238
70-74	5.9%	152
75-79	2.2%	56
80-84	0.6%	15
85 and over	0.1%	3
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander		
Aboriginal	1.9%	53
Torres Strait Islander	0.3%	8
DELWP region		
Barwon South West	6.4%	181
Gippsland	13.7%	387
Grampians	4.8%	136
Hume	7.1%	200
Loddon Mallee	7.5%	211
Metropolitan Melbourne	58.2%	1642
Outside Victoria/did not respond	2.3%	65

Survey respondent location



Question 1. How can we protect and improve our forests for all Victorians?

Respondents were invited to respond in their own words to the question 'How can we protect and improve our forests for all Victorians'. The question was responded by 2,566 people and has been themed under 7 broad categories.

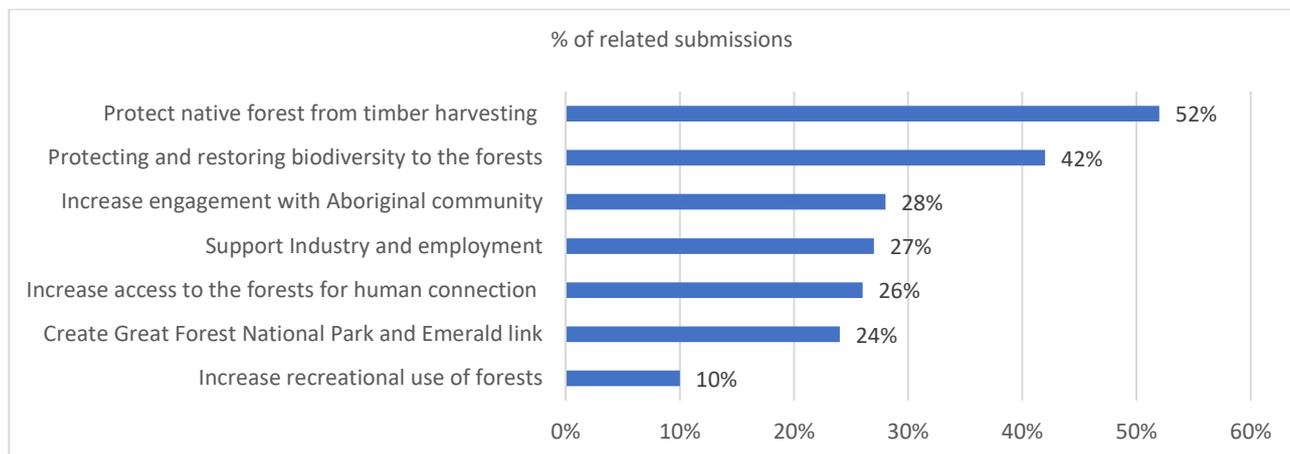


Figure 1: How can we protect and improve our forests for all Victorians? Number of respondents answered: 2566
(Please note these percentages will not add up to 100% as respondents could comment on multiple themes)

Timber Industry

The highest number of comments, at 52%, related to timber and the role of the timber industry. The overarching theme of these comments was *protecting native forests from timber harvesting*. Some people suggested taking timber harvesting out of native forests and transitioning to plantations. Others wanted to see forests protected with agreements that stopped timber harvesting, especially in old-growth and mature native forests.

"...must be transitioned into plantation forestry as soon as possible with no further loss to our horribly depleted mature native forests."

Biodiversity and Restoration

Protecting and restoring biodiversity to the forests was the next most important area at 42%. Direct comments were made about biodiversity, conservation, flora, fauna and wildlife, with themes of protecting native habitats, restoring biodiversity, improving land care and management. People want to see forests restored where damage has occurred and mentioned pest control and management and climate change.

"Forests in Victoria should be protected for current and future generations. Forests are critical to the production of good air quality, the mental and physical wellbeing of the community and the conservation of biodiversity in the state. Forests should not be logged. Forests should be viewed as a critical component of Victoria's ecosystem and therefore protected and enhanced as a priority."

Increase engagement with Aboriginal communities

There was support from people for *increased engagement with the Aboriginal community*, including learning about better ways to manage forests and involving them more in planning and caring for the land. Indigenous and native Australia was referenced by 28% of respondents, with 7% discussing Australia's history, heritage and culture and 4% directly mentioning Traditional Owners. There were suggestions for key state organisations including DELWP to work in partnership closely with Aboriginal communities to manage forests.

"Work with the indigenous community sincerely, respectfully, and deeply to implement their plans for management of public lands that they have responsibility for. Employ lots of indigenous rangers and other roles to work on the land."

and

"Respect the native, traditional owners and caretakers of the land, protect and mark sacred sites and explain why certain areas may be off-limits."

Industry and Employment

A recurring theme in responses centred on economic viability, job opportunities and future industries for forests. Some participants (27%) discussed jobs and employment. There was support to maintain jobs and economic opportunities from forest-based industries, with most supporting a transition to plantations, and other non-timber based industries such as tourism.

"For our future generations to have work in sawmills and logging jobs and the thousands of flow-on employment opportunities these forests provide"

"...we need to transition to sustainable long-term industries and industry practices."

"Logging native forest is unsustainable and the industry is in decline and as such, it makes sense to end logging and support endeavours such as the Emerald Link and the Great Forest National Park, providing jobs in tourism and protecting our native resources for generations to come."

Recreational Use and Connection

Increasing access to the forests for human connection with nature was also a strong theme.

Respondents discussed recreational use, and specifically hunting (4-6%), hiking or bushwalking (4%), and other activities such as horse riding, four-wheel-driving, camping, fishing and trails.

There were specific references in this section to two areas for proposed protection, the Emerald Link (9%) and the Great Forest National Park (15%).

Question 2. What benefits do you want future generations to gain or enjoy from Victoria's forests?

Respondents were invited to say in their own words what benefits they wanted future generations to gain or enjoy from forests. Many respondents conveyed strong aspirational statements about forests and their intrinsic value. This question was responded to by 2,549 people and has been themed under 6 broad categories:

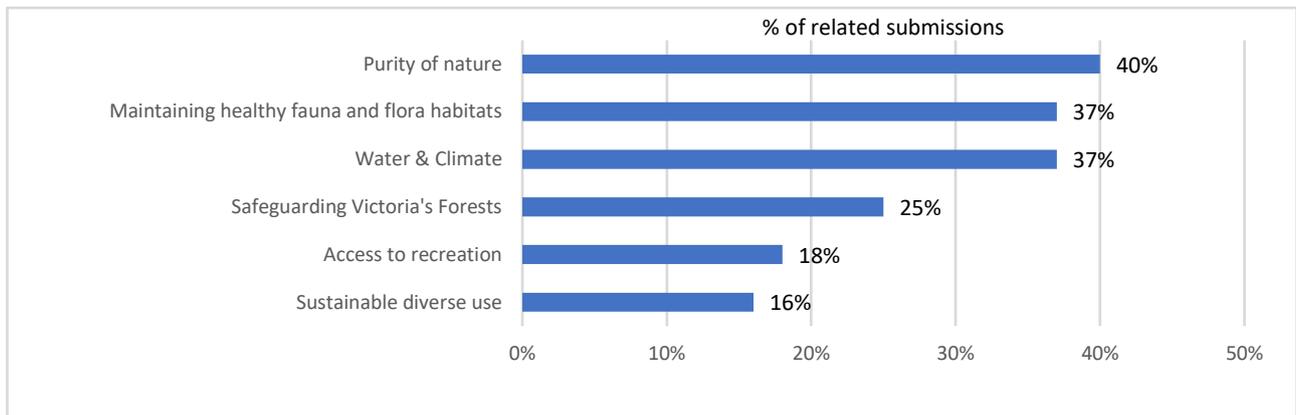


Figure 2: What benefits do you want future generations to gain or enjoy from Victoria's forests? Number of respondents answered: 2549 (Please note these percentages will not add up to 100% because respondents commented on multiple themes)

Purity of Nature

The *purity of nature* evident in forests was central to about 40% of responses. Terms like pristine, natural therapy, intact, indigenous and protected were used. The comments made in response to this question go to the heart of the value of forests that respondents want to see preserved for future generations.

"To enjoy the ecosystem services of the forests such as clean air, fresh water and carbon storage, to enjoy the survival of endangered species protected by the forests, the calm and pristine environment and the knowledge that it will thrive into the future."

"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."

Key terms included the value of nature, opportunities to experience nature and the feeling of awe and tranquillity that people experience when in Victoria's forests.

"I want future Victorians to be able to benefit from all that the forests bring - biodiversity and protection of endangered species, the role they play in carbon capture and clean water, and the health benefits (mental and physical) of being able to access these natural environments."

Flora, Fauna, Water

As well as maintaining the purity of the forests, a significant portion of participants (37%) were concerned with *maintaining healthy flora and fauna and habitats*, keeping biodiversity and introducing conservation of wildlife.

"I want my children and grandchildren to be able to experience the unique wildlife that the forests are home to and to be able to see the wonderful old trees."

The theme of preservation and restoration continued, with 33% of participants directly mentioning water and climate in their responses. Key terms included life support systems, clean water, clean air, and carbon sink.

“Other benefits that I want future generations to be able to enjoy are clean drinking water and lessened impact from climate change both of which can only be achieved by protecting the native forests that we have and ending logging.”

Around a quarter (25%) of respondents directly mentioned the theme of *safeguarding Victoria’s forests*, protecting or preserving them for future generations.

“We need to preserve the biodiversity of life in our country... We must safeguard the connections with nature that preserving our forest offer.”

“These fantastic resources are vital to safeguard our water supplies, retain our unique wildlife and ecosystems and to help absorb the carbon dioxide that our ever-growing cities will produce. We owe it to future generations to allow them to also have access to these precious resources, and not to squander these for short term material gain.”

Access to Recreation

Access to recreation was important for respondents. Around 18% of participants expressed a desire to continue activities for the benefit of future generations including camping (9%), hunting (4%), fishing (5%) and other activities such as four-wheel-drive, horse riding, and trails (4%). In addition, participants talked about hiking, bushwalking, birdwatching, cycling, prospecting and tourism. In other words, people want to protect the forests and to keep having access to them for diverse activities – protection means from harm, not from human involvement.

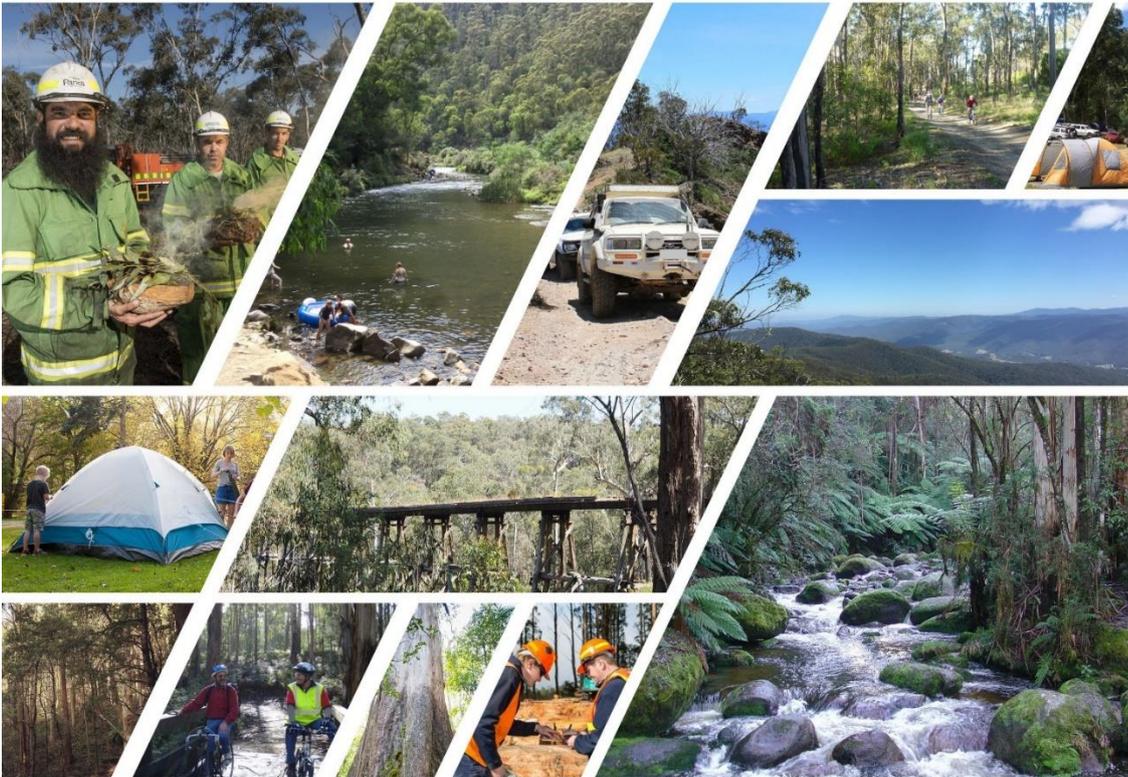
“The benefits that all generations should have from our forests, is the ability to access the forest to undertake outdoor activities which they enjoy.”

Diversity of Use

Some respondents also supported *sustainable diverse use* of Victoria’s forests, including timber, plantations, recreation, employment, research and place to escape (16%). People stated a desire for continued freedom to use the bush and for keeping the forest accessible.

“A balance needs to be found to allow the forest to be the forest, but to enable human interaction with these niches and broadscale environments.”

Question 3. Write your vision inspired by an image below.



There were 2,128 responses to this image which themed around six broad categories:

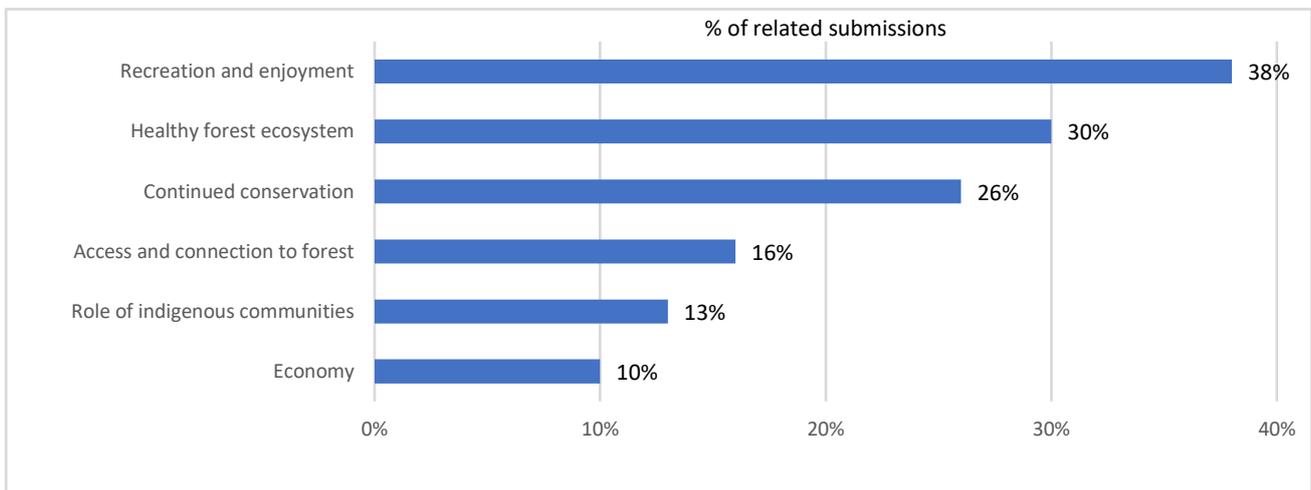


Figure 3: Write your vision inspired by an image below. Number of respondents answered: 2128
(Please note these percentages will not add up to 100% because respondents commented on multiple themes)

Responses to this vision question prompted some statements that bring together the themes discussed thus far. They demonstrate the value of our forests held by respondents and their desire to protect their inherent characteristics. See Appendix 1 for the full range of verbatim vision statements.

“My vision of the future of our forests is that they are protected for their own sake and appreciated for the value they bring in terms of a connected ecosystem and valuable habitat for native species - not just measured in terms of resources and the value that they bring to our own lives. Also, I would love to see people understanding the value that they do actually bring directly to us, such as the clean water and air that they supply us, and the positives for our mental well-being.”

“I would like: the inherent beauty of native forests to be restored and maintained (last photo); the habitats of native flora and fauna to be protected; current and future generations of humans to benefit from contact with nature in peaceful, healthy, beautiful forests; and for traditional owners, concerned citizens and government agencies to be adequately resourced to protect these precious forests.”

Recreation and Enjoyment

The most common theme (38%) was that of *recreation and enjoyment*. Respondents want to see Victoria’s forests open to camping, boating, fishing, hiking, canoeing, biking, and other leisure activities. They want amenity facilities in forests like campsites, playgrounds and parks for family, friends, tourists and all people. Within this theme they also mention the importance of minimal impact, future generations, taking care and feeling proud.

Healthy Forest Ecosystem

Three out of ten participants want to see forests with healthy ecosystems and biodiversity of native flora, fauna and wildlife species. Key terms included native forests, managed, ecosystem services, natural areas, environmental benefits and survival. The comments made under this theme envisioned the protection of forests to preserve the natural environment for generations to come.

“Forests to be sustainably managed into the future with a primary emphasis on protection of biodiversity, to ensure that the benefits of provision of ecological services, water supplies, recreational activities and the beauty of the natural environment are preserved for current and future generations.”

Continued Conservation

Continued conservation was discussed by 26% of respondents, who are concerned with the preservation of the pristine, clean and beautiful natural environments of Victoria’s forests.

“I imagine places that are relatively pristine teeming with wildlife where I can go and breathe in the fresh clean air and soak in the beauty of Mother Nature. Where there are trees, hundreds of years old, that leave me in awe of their magnificence. Where the water running through the creeks and streams is so clean and sparkling I could drink it. Where the sounds of the birds and the animals fill me with peace. In a world where stress and mental health issues are increasing, it is so crucial that we leave what’s left of our natural places intact.”

Access and Connection

Specific comments about *access and connection to forests* were made by 16% of respondents, including education and awareness initiatives. The comments were in keeping with those made in response to Questions 1 and 2, supporting the desire of Victorians to retain access and connection to forests.

“I would like to see public access maintained for recreational activities and public educated so they enjoy public spaces and feel a sense of connection and pride and respect forests not pollute them.”

Responses included discussion of enjoyment, harmony, appreciation, respect, values and improvement. Specifically mentioned were 4WDs, camping, parks, tracks, with an emphasis on community, integrity and public.

Role of Aboriginal Communities

Respondents acknowledged the *role of indigenous communities* in our forests (13%). They acknowledged the integral role of Traditional Owners in forest management and protection and called for this to be part of future planning.

"I see each bioregion having its own unique plan, with each state forest within it managed as part of that plan with a strong traditional owner management, particularly bringing in traditional land management practices."

Economy

The *economy* was raised in 10% of comments, specifically around industrial timber harvesting, regeneration, ecotourism and jobs. Suggestions to support robust regional economies were made.

"There is a strong need for a sustainable timber industry, an industry that supports and provides benefits to all Victorians."

"A healthy ecosystem promotes jobs and recreation through ecotourism as well as ecosystem services."

Question 4. What should our forests be managed for?

Respondents were asked to rank several values under 'What should our forests should be managed for' within Victoria. Based on a total weighted rank *conserving plant and animals* was ranked first followed by *maintaining water and catchment health* and *maintaining natural landscapes*.

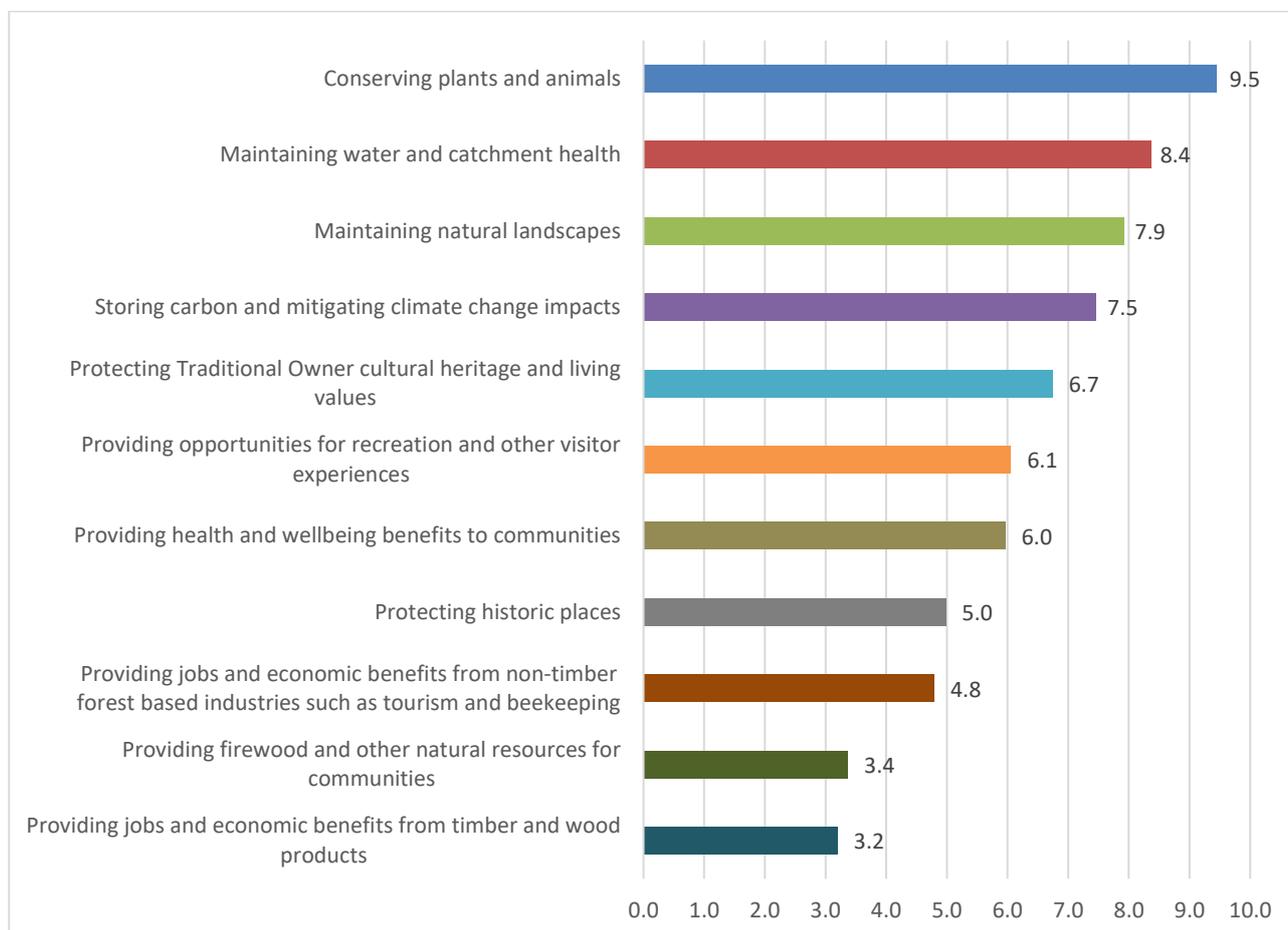


Figure 4: What should our forests be managed for? (Weighted score) Number of respondents answered: 2662

Protection of forests

The responses to this question highlight the need to protect our forests including *conserving plants and animals*, *maintaining water and catchment health*, *maintaining natural landscapes*, *storing carbon and mitigating climate change impacts*. This is a major theme throughout the engagement responses.

Culture and heritage

The fifth and eighth ranked values were for forests to be managed for the *protection of Traditional Owner cultural heritage and living values* and the *protection of historic places*.

Recreation and Wellbeing

Just under half of respondents rated *providing opportunities for recreation and other visitor experiences* of average importance (6.1) in terms of forest management.

Economy (timber-based industries and non- timber-based industries)

Both timber based industries and non-timber-based industries ranked low for this question. There was a small number of participants (8.2%) who consider that *providing jobs and economic benefits from timber and wood products* as an important driver for forest management.

Region and Age Comparison

There was some variation in these results between the regional and Melbourne metropolitan respondents, with attention drawn to the following:

- Regional respondents were more likely to rate *providing jobs and economic benefits from timber and wood products* and *providing firewood and other natural resources for communities* higher than people in Metropolitan Melbourne. Metropolitan respondents had a total weighted score of 2.5 for the items above compared to regions with a weighted score of 4.1.
- Regional respondents rated *providing opportunities for recreation and other visitor experiences* (weighted score of 6.5) higher than Metropolitan Melbourne respondents (weighted score of 5.7) Metropolitan Melbourne respondents were more likely to rate *protecting Traditional Owner cultural heritage and living values* higher than people in the regions. Metropolitan respondents had a total weighted score of 6.7 for the item above were as the regions had weighted score of 6.0.

There was very little variation in the results between age groups, with attention drawn to the following:

- Respondents aged 60+ were more likely to rate *providing jobs and economic benefits from timber and wood products* lower than the other age groups. The total mean score for respondents under 30 years was 2.7, for 30-59 years it was 3.3 and for 60+ years it was 1.8.

Table 1

The table on the next page shows each option and the ranking that was given. The total number of responses has been added up for each option, showing how many ranked that item as the most important (1), through to least important (11). Totals for each response are then added, and weighted scores calculated.

The table collates the ranking and percentage of respondents across all questions, showing the responses with the highest ranked rating through to the lowest.

Note that the descending rankings don't mean that they are ranked in order of preference. Rather, they show the number of people who ranked that item as the most important. For example, *providing jobs and economic benefits from timber and wood products* is the lowest ranked item overall despite being in the top three preferred options for 319 respondents.

		Ranking											Weighted score	Weighted Rank
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Conserving plants and animals	#	1147	592	314	145	95	66	58	51	39	35	27	9.5	1
	%	44.6%	23.0%	12.2%	5.6%	3.7%	2.6%	2.3%	2.0%	1.5%	1.4%	1.1%		
Maintaining water and catchment health	#	195	670	579	451	253	164	85	83	38	22	12	8.4	2
	%	7.6%	26.3%	22.7%	17.7%	9.9%	6.4%	3.3%	3.3%	1.5%	0.9%	0.5%		
Maintaining natural landscapes	#	260	409	551	391	317	179	151	118	100	42	0	7.9	3
	%	10.3%	16.2%	21.9%	15.5%	12.6%	7.1%	6.0%	4.7%	4.0%	1.7%	0.0%		
Storing carbon and mitigating climate change impacts	#	330	340	411	497	219	151	113	106	92	103	151	7.5	4
	%	13.1%	13.5%	16.4%	19.8%	8.7%	6.0%	4.5%	4.2%	3.7%	4.1%	6.0%		
Protecting Traditional Owner cultural heritage and living values	#	105	144	220	367	591	300	247	173	116	98	0	6.7	5
	%	4.4%	6.1%	9.3%	15.5%	25.0%	12.7%	10.5%	7.3%	4.9%	4.2%	0.0%		
Providing opportunities for recreation and other visitor experiences	#	221	106	145	151	260	354	530	431	245	64	0	6.1	6
	%	8.8%	4.2%	5.8%	6.0%	10.4%	14.1%	21.1%	17.2%	9.8%	2.6%	0.0%		
Providing health and wellbeing benefits to communities	#	106	119	128	239	341	506	417	331	231	88	35	6.0	7
	%	4.2%	4.7%	5.0%	9.4%	13.4%	19.9%	16.4%	13.0%	9.1%	3.5%	1.4%		
Protecting historic places	#	53	44	59	123	186	404	379	425	491	183	0	5.0	8
	%	2.3%	1.9%	2.5%	5.2%	7.9%	17.2%	16.1%	18.1%	20.9%	7.8%	0.0%		
Providing jobs and economic benefits from non-timber forest-based industries such as tourism and beekeeping	#	28	40	78	118	203	291	351	485	600	178	0	4.8	9
	%	1.2%	1.7%	3.3%	5.0%	8.6%	12.3%	14.8%	20.4%	25.3%	7.5%	0.0%		
Providing firewood and other natural resources for communities	#	60	97	75	63	56	61	88	129	245	986	403	3.4	10
	%	2.7%	4.3%	3.3%	2.8%	2.5%	2.7%	3.9%	5.7%	10.8%	43.6%	17.8%		
Providing jobs and economic benefits from timber and wood products	#	156	89	74	50	47	53	54	75	110	378	1134	3.2	11
	%	7.0%	4.0%	3.3%	2.3%	2.1%	2.4%	2.4%	3.4%	5.0%	17.0%	51.1%		

Table 1: What should our forests be managed for? (Ranked in order of priority).

Question 5. What are we currently doing well, regarding forest management in Victoria?

For 'What we are doing well regarding forest management in Victoria', most respondents (55.5%) said *providing access and facilities for activities you enjoy*. Over a quarter of respondents, 33.3% rated *providing Victorian communities with an opportunity to have their say* as something that is being done well. This is followed by *managing bushfire risk and/or fuel loads* (21.5%) and *protection of our flora and fauna* (20.7%). *Being adaptive to a changing environment, climate and major bushfires* (9.1%) was selected the least. (Please note these percentages will not add up to 100% because respondents could choose multiple options).

All other options were under 20%. These include, *protection of traditional and/or cultural heritage*, *emphasis on jobs, income and economic benefits*, *maximising opportunities to use the resources our forests produce*, and *being adaptive to a changing environment, climate and major bushfires*.

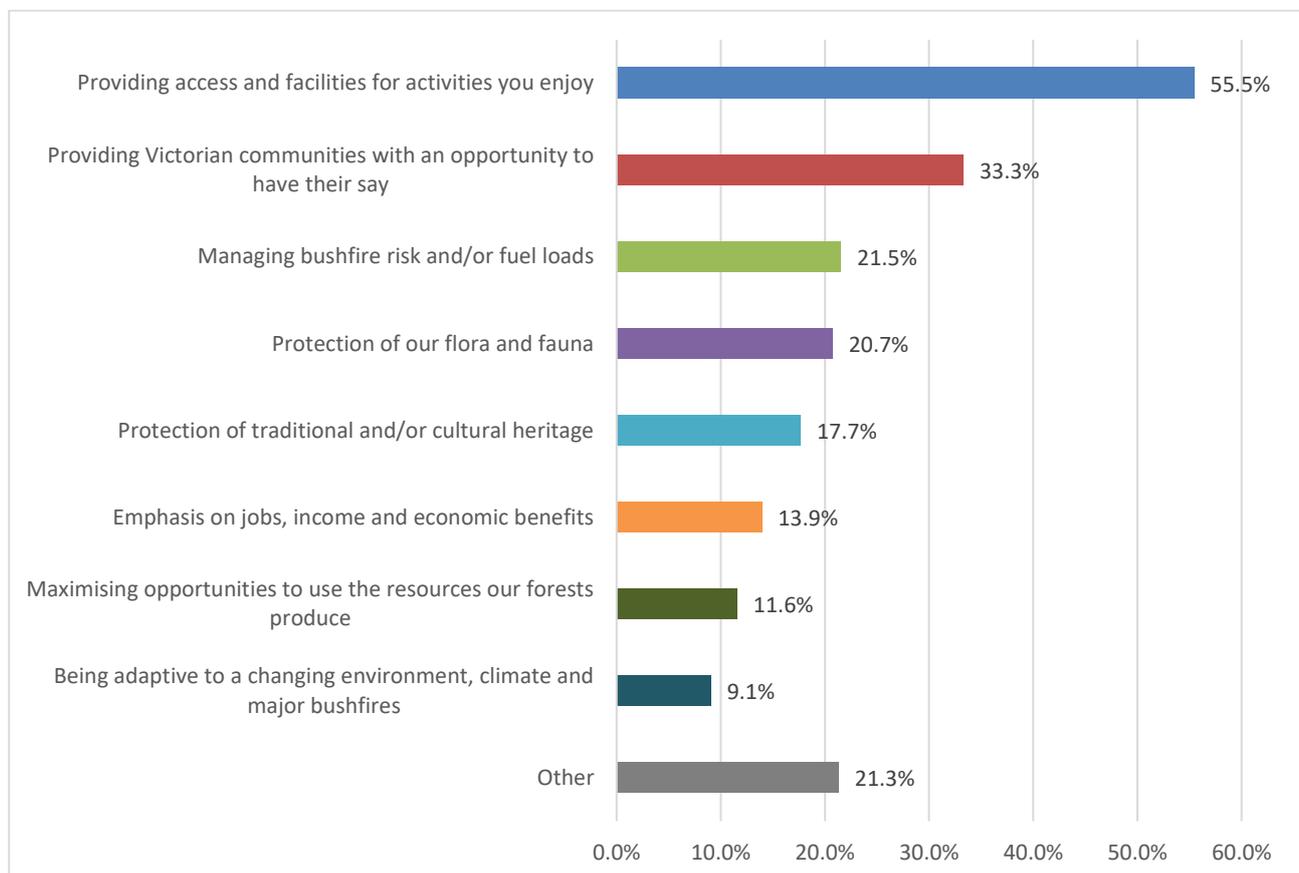


Figure 5: What are we currently doing well, regarding forest management in Victoria? Number of respondents answered: 2330 (Please note these percentages will not add up to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses)

Region and Age Comparison

There was some variation in these results between regional and Metropolitan Melbourne respondents, with attention drawn to the following:

- Regional respondents were more likely to choose *protection of traditional and/or cultural heritage* and *protection of our flora and fauna* than people in Metropolitan Melbourne.
- Metropolitan Melbourne respondents were more likely to choose *providing Victorian communities with an opportunity to have their say* and *providing access and facilities for activities you enjoy* than regional respondents.

There was some variation in these results between age groups, with attention drawn to the following:

- Respondents under 30 years were more likely to choose *being adaptive to a changing environment, climate and major bushfires* and *protection of traditional and/or cultural heritage* than the other age groups.
- Respondents aged 30-59 years selected *protection of our flora and fauna* and *providing access and facilities for activities you enjoy* more than the other age groups.

Question 6. What concerns you most about the way we are currently managing our forests?

In response to this question, *insufficient protection of flora and fauna* was ranked first. This was followed by *forest management not adaptive to climate change or major bushfires* and *Victorian communities unable to have a say in how forests are managed*.

The answer to this question can be analysed alongside Question 5 which asked, 'What is being done well in forest management'. Question 6 showed people's major concerns were about the way forests are currently managed whereas Question 5 shows a lack of confidence in management of forests for climate change and bushfires.

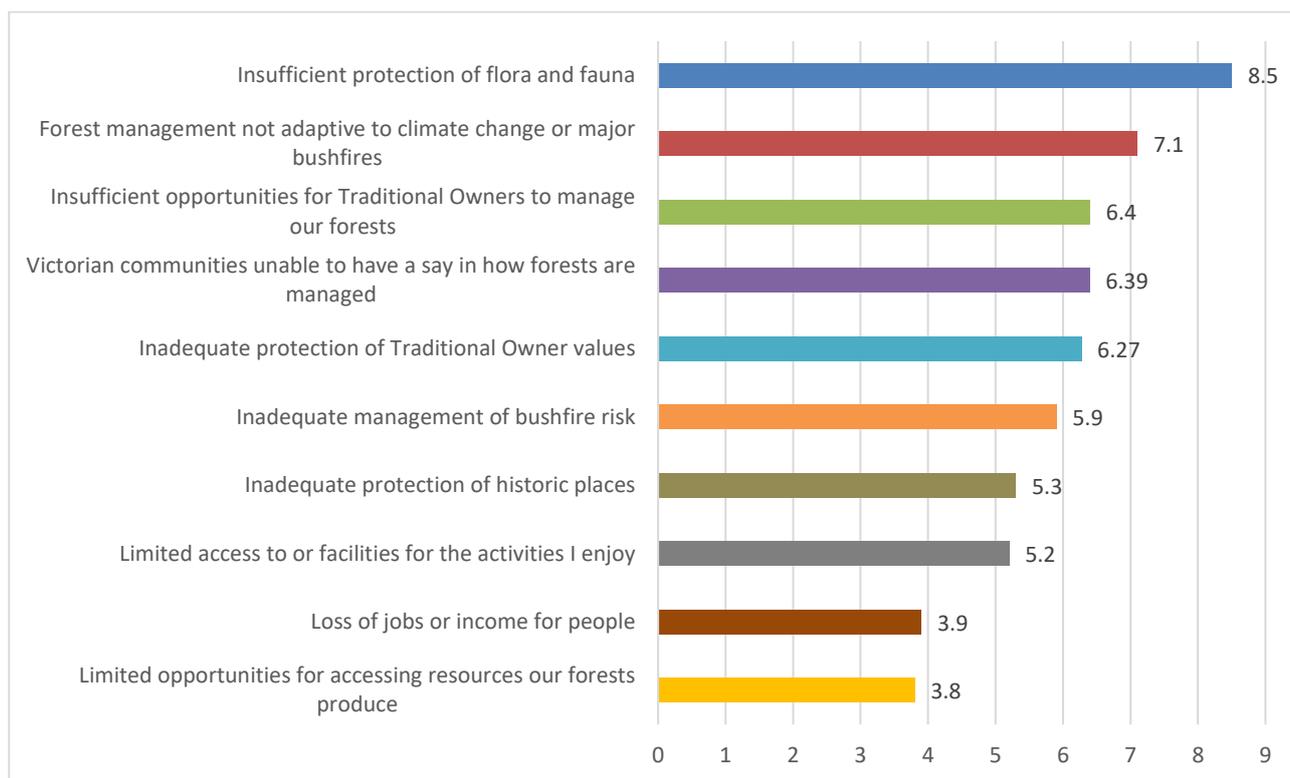


Figure 6: What concerns you most about the way we are currently managing our forests? (Weighted score) Number of respondents answered: 2612

Concern for the protection and management of forests

The responses to this question highlight clearly that *insufficient protection of flora and fauna* and *not being adaptive to climate change and major bushfires* are major concerns for respondents. The protection of forests is a major theme in the report. There are some people for whom maintaining jobs and accessing resources from forests is of significant concern.

Culture and heritage

The third and fifth rated concerns for current management were *insufficient opportunities for Traditional Owners to manage our forests* and *inadequate protection of Traditional Owner values*. This points to an overall concern across the survey towards Aboriginal community involvement in forest management, and protection of cultural heritage.

The table on the next page shows each option and the ranking that was given when asked '*What concerns you most about the way we are currently managing our forests*'. The total number of responses is added up for each option, showing how many ranked that item as the most important (1), through to those that ranked it as the least important (9). Totals for each response are then added, and weighted scores calculated.

The table collates the ranking and percentage of respondents across all questions, showing the options with the highest ranked rating through to the lowest.

Note that the descending rankings don't mean that they are ranked in order of preference. Rather, they show the number of people who ranked that item as the most important. For example, *limited opportunities for accessing resources forests produce*, is the lowest ranked item overall despite being in the top three preferred options for 319 respondents.

Region and Age Comparison

There was significant variation in these results between the regions and Metropolitan Melbourne respondents, with attention drawn to the following:

- Regional respondents rated *forest management not adaptive to climate change or major bushfires* and *inadequate management of bushfire risk* a lot higher than people in Metropolitan Melbourne. Regional respondents ranked *forest management not adaptive to climate change or major bushfires* as their second top concern whereas metropolitan only had it as their seventh top concern. *Inadequate management of bushfire risk* was rated forth highest concern for regional respondents whereas Metropolitan Melbourne respondents ranked it as their eighth highest concern.
- Metropolitan Melbourne respondents were slightly more likely to rate *insufficient protection of flora and fauna* and *inadequate protection of Traditional Owner values* higher than regional respondents.

There was some variation in these results between age groups, with attention drawn to the following:

- Respondents under 30 and over 60 years were more likely to rate *insufficient opportunities for Traditional Owners to manage our forests* higher than the 30-59 years age group.
- Respondents aged 30-59 years rated *Victorian communities unable to have a say in how forests are managed* higher than the other age groups.

		Ranking										Weighted score	Weighted Rank
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Insufficient protection of flora and fauna	#	1341	313	203	131	73	66	93	67	38	65	8.5	1
	%	56.1%	13.1%	8.5%	5.5%	3.1%	2.8%	3.9%	2.8%	1.6%	2.7%		
Forest management not adaptive to climate change or major bushfires	#	205	576	329	283	254	215	123	68	39	58	7.1	2
	%	9.5%	26.8%	15.3%	13.2%	11.8%	10.0%	5.7%	3.2%	1.8%	2.7%		
Insufficient opportunities for Traditional Owners to manage our forests	#	216	245	360	320	255	140	116	91	125	135	6.4	3
	%	10.8%	12.2%	18.0%	16.0%	12.7%	7.0%	5.8%	4.5%	6.2%	6.7%		
Victorian communities unable to have a say in how forests are managed	#	116	335	307	302	267	234	182	169	57	52	6.39	4
	%	5.7%	16.6%	15.2%	14.9%	13.2%	11.6%	9.0%	8.4%	2.8%	2.6%		
Inadequate protection of Traditional Owner values	#	87	316	359	373	228	170	110	121	159	91	6.27	5
	%	4.3%	15.7%	17.8%	18.5%	11.3%	8.4%	5.5%	6.0%	7.9%	4.5%		
Inadequate management of bushfire risk	#	147	223	253	194	219	215	247	246	109	47	5.9	6
	%	7.7%	11.7%	13.3%	10.2%	11.5%	11.3%	13.0%	12.9%	5.7%	2.5%		
Inadequate protection of historic places	#	46	118	168	194	272	335	311	242	96	58	5.3	7
	%	2.5%	6.4%	9.1%	10.5%	14.8%	18.2%	16.9%	13.2%	5.2%	3.2%		
Limited access to or facilities for the activities I enjoy	#	215	95	117	130	176	221	258	333	172	109	5.2	8
	%	11.8%	5.2%	6.4%	7.1%	9.6%	12.1%	14.1%	18.2%	9.4%	6.0%		
Loss of jobs or income for people	#	126	141	87	73	69	82	131	167	447	441	3.9	9
	%	7.1%	8.0%	4.9%	4.1%	3.9%	4.6%	7.4%	9.5%	25.3%	25.0%		
Limited opportunities for accessing resources forests produce	#	113	95	111	104	96	89	102	135	380	543	3.8	10
	%	6.4%	5.4%	6.3%	5.9%	5.4%	5.0%	5.8%	7.6%	21.5%	30.7%		

Table 2: What concerns you most about the way we are currently managing our forests? (Ranked in order of priority).

Question 7. What could be done to alleviate your concerns and improve the things you most value about our forests?

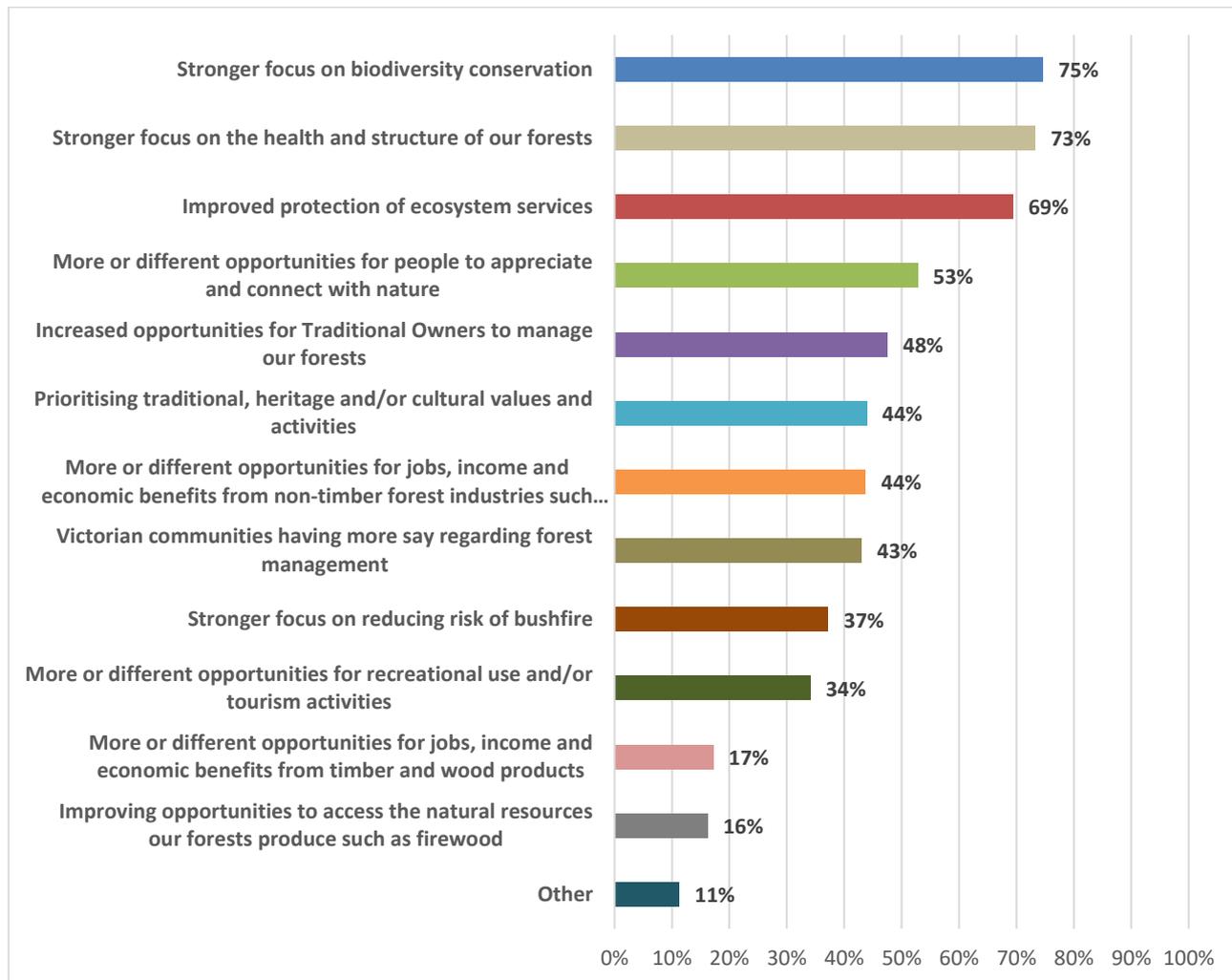


Figure 7: What could be done to alleviate your concerns and improve the things you most value about our forests? Number of respondents answered: 2764

(Please note these percentages will not add up to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses)

Health, Biodiversity, Conservation and Ecosystem Protection

When asked ‘*What could be done to alleviate concerns and improve the things most valued about forests in Victoria*’, most respondents (75%) said *stronger focus on biodiversity conservation* followed by *stronger focus on the health and structure of our forests* (73%) and *improved protection of ecosystem services* (69%). These strongly supported statements are consistent with the other questions, rating the health and biodiversity of the forests as the most important.

The responses to this question have reflected similar themes to earlier questions. In response to Question 1, respondents said that they wanted to protect and improve biodiversity, and here they have rated an even stronger focus on biodiversity conservation. In rating these options as ways to alleviate concerns and the improve things they value, respondents are also saying they want an active focus on these areas - they don’t believe it will just happen without action and intent.

Traditional Owners

Support for involvement of Traditional Owners was also high in response to this question, at 48% (*increased opportunities for Traditional Owners to manage our forests*); supported by *prioritising of traditional, heritage and/or cultural values and activities* at 44%. This again shows support for active engagement and stronger involvement of Traditional Owners in forest management. This demonstrates a recognition of the value that Traditional Owners could bring to improving the way people value about forests.

Having a Say

Victorian communities having more say regarding forest management was again selected by high numbers of respondents, at 43%. Victorians want more say in how forests are managed, around 27% having said 'Giving Victorians a say was important; and a similar percentage rated this as a concern; whereas close to half said having a say would alleviate their concerns and contribute to improvement of things they value about forests. The results suggest that improving the ability of Victorians to have a say about their forests would be regarded highly by many people.

Bushfire

A stronger focus on reducing the risk of bushfire was rated as important by 37% of respondents. This is consistent with the overall concern for protection and management of forests.

Economic Development (non-timber-based industries)

Nearly half of respondents (44%) support *more or different opportunities for jobs, income and economic benefits from non-timber forest industries such as tourism and beekeeping*.

Economic Development (timber-based industries)

Just over a quarter (17%) selected *more or different opportunities for job, income and economic benefits from timber and wood products* as most important. When comparing timber-based industries (17%) with non-timber-based industries (44%) supporting greater opportunities for non-timber based is much a higher priority for respondents.

Access to Natural Resources

As in other questions, some respondents also rated *improving opportunities to access the natural resources our forests produce such as firewood* (16%) as the most important. Although this had the lowest score, it does represent at least 449 responses, showing consistent support for these opportunities to continue to be available.

Region and Age Comparison

There was some variation in these results between the regional and Metropolitan Melbourne respondents, with attention drawn to the following:

- Regional respondents were slightly more likely to choose *improving opportunities to access the natural resources our forests produce such as firewood and more or different opportunities for jobs, income and economic benefits from timber and wood products* than people in Metropolitan Melbourne.
- Metropolitan Melbourne respondents were more likely to choose *stronger focus on biodiversity conservation and stronger focus on the health and structure of our forests* than people in regional Victoria.

There was some variation in these results between age groups, with attention drawn to the following:

- Respondents aged 30-59 years selected *stronger focus on biodiversity conservation and stronger focus on the health and structure of our forests* more than the other age groups.
- Respondents aged under 30 years were slightly more likely to choose *prioritising traditional, heritage and/or cultural values and activities and increased opportunities for Traditional Owners to manage our forests* compared to other age groups.

Question 8. How do you see your role in future forest management?

Protecting forests was again highlighted in responses to this question, with a strong theme of *advocacy and education* for future generations. There were 2,227 responses to this question, with the following broad themes identified:

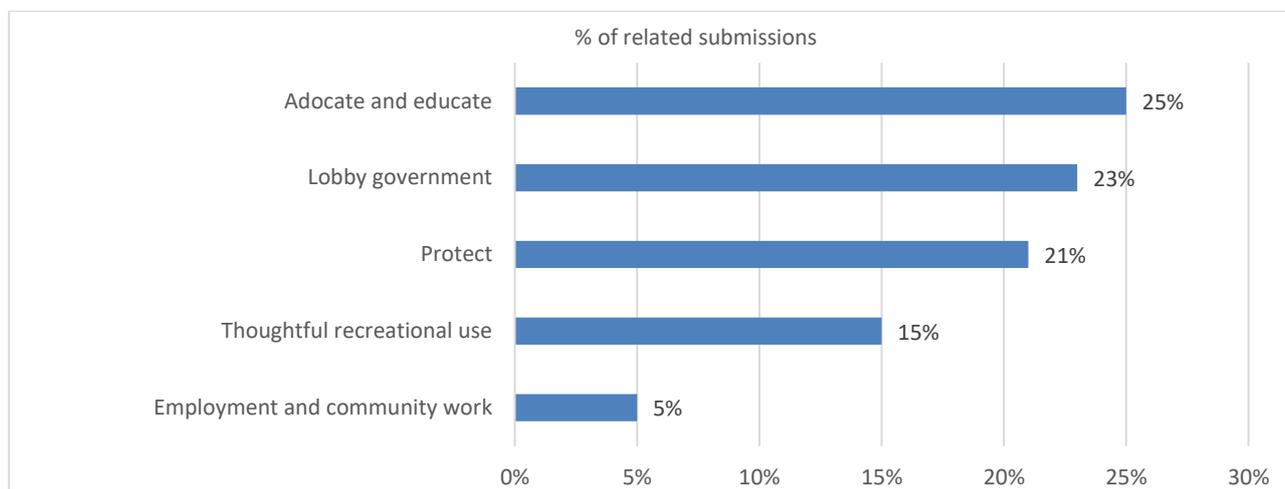


Figure 7: How do you see your role in future forest management? Number of respondents answered: 2227

Advocate and Educate

A quarter of respondents (25%) said their role would centre on *advocating and educating* people on the importance of forest protection.

"The role of our generation is to protect what is left of our forests, particularly native and old-growth forests, to protect and assist the conservation of the native wildlife dependent upon our forests and to replant forests, not only for the benefit of future generations, but particularly for the health of our planet and combatting climate change."

People wrote about their intention to actively encourage, promote and share with the community, family, friends and children the value of survival of the forests, and their intention to advocate *"for better forest management to promote conservation and protect biodiversity"*. People also said it was important to support forest management and were concerned *"...for the future of natural ecosystems..."*. They also raised concern about the decline of native species and the destruction caused by timber harvesting coupes and burning.

Lobby Government

Many participants (23%) felt that their role was in the political space, saying they wanted to lobby State and Federal Government to introduce policy and change legislation to protect forests as well as using their vote to support policy that aligns with their view. Responses included using their voice, speaking out, telling, asking and keeping pressure on governments through existing processes.

They were concerned with better funding and evidence-based forest management.

"I have a strong part to play in ensuring our shared natural assets remain healthy and thriving for future generations, for example, lobbying and telling our government to protect our forests from logging, for wildlife and our sustainable use and for climate change and water protection."

Protection

Protection was raised specifically in 21% of responses. This ranged from passive language such as hope and regard to active, strong language like fight, stop and argue. Participants wanted to protect biodiversity, native animals and plants, indigenous culture, Australia's uniqueness, history and assets.

"I will be an advocate for protecting our forests and will speak out against wasting our forests and destroying them for short term gains and not thinking about protecting them for their inherent qualities, such as carbon storage, clean air produced, habitat for our birds and animals, historic and cultural significance and as a green haven from our cities and suburbs."

The role that forests play in combatting climate change was also cited as a reason to protect and preserve forests and ecosystems.

Thoughtful Recreational Use

Thoughtful recreational use in forests in a sustainable and respectful manner was important to 15% of respondents.

"...to use Victoria's forests for recreation and adventuring, with an approach of respect and with the awe they deserve."

Mention was made of considering the footprint on forests and "*leaving them as best we found them*". Forests were described as sources of inspiration, restoration and well-being. People saw it as important to use forests respectfully.

"I see myself as a regular user of Victorian forests for recreational purposes in a way that respects and conserves their social, cultural, and environmental value."

Similar activities as those raised in earlier responses were mentioned, including camping, hiking, four-wheel driving, bird watching, fishing, biking, natural therapy and outdoor enjoyment.

Employment and Community Work

A role in employment or volunteer work in Victoria's forests was envisaged by 5% of respondents.

"I will continue to promote the protection of our forests and be an advocate for our forests. I'd love to be a ranger one day!"

There was also strong support for volunteering to improve environment, research, support community, work and manage forests, with some mentioning intentions of future donations of time and resources. Respondents wanted to see future job opportunities in forests.

"I will be actively supporting any initiatives that increase opportunities for Traditional Owner forest management and the creation of a Great Forest National Park. I actively use and seek out tourism in our state and national parks and will continue to invest my free time and my money in those spaces and communities."

Question 9. Mapping Question: Tell us what you love about our forests?

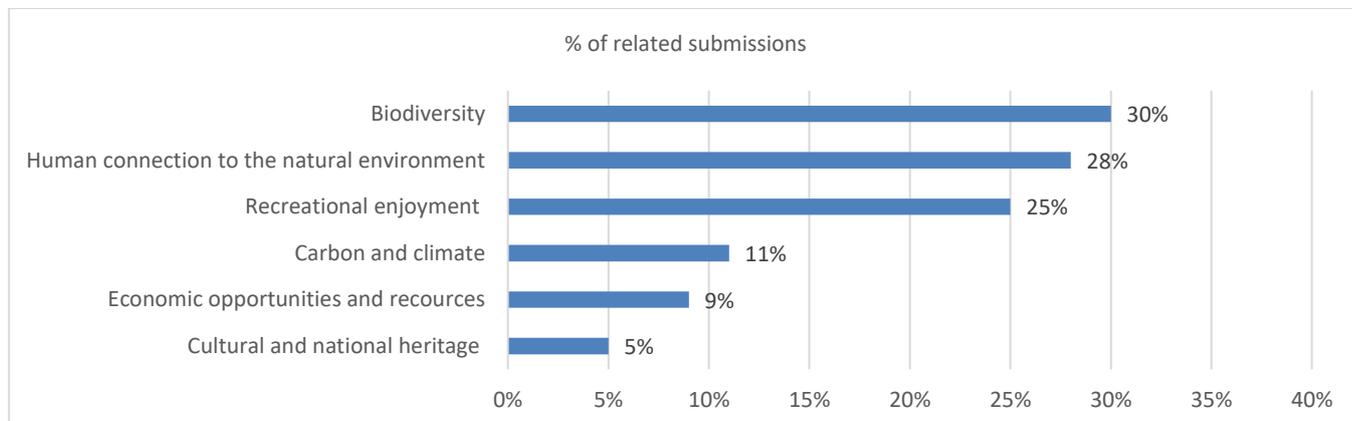


Figure 8: Mapping Question: Tell us what you love about our forests. Number of respondents answered: 2068

Biodiversity

The responses show similar themes to other questions, including protection of biodiversity in forests to enable them to thrive, to continue to be enjoyed by current and future generations and to impart benefits to the climate and environment. *Biodiversity* and protection of endangered natural wildlife was mentioned directly by 30% of respondents. Key terms included reference to threats to habitat, birds, plants and animals and the role that human destruction has had on the bush. People described connected and thriving ecosystems.

"...the temperate rainforest, the trees, the ferns, the mosses and other bryophytes, the chaos and abundance of the lush forest ecosystem and all its constituent components – plant, animal, microbial, mineral."

People also spoke of their desire for the forest to *"...remain for others who would also feel the same"*, and for the experience of Victoria's forests to *"...be possible for generations to come"*.

Human Connection to the Natural Environment

Respondents mentioned the beneficial impact of being outdoors in the bush, particularly as it related to mental health and overall well-being as well as describing a sense of peace and calm in a place of escape from the hustle and bustle of Melbourne and town life.

"Easily accessible forest spaces are so important for town dwellers. Even a brief walk in nature helps well-being immensely."

Recreational Enjoyment

A quarter (25%) of respondents said *recreational enjoyment* is something they loved, with key activities mentioned including trail walking, horse riding, gold detecting, camping, fishing, hunting, motorbike riding and four-wheel driving. These themes and similar activities were mentioned again and again, providing a clear message that access to forests for these activities is valued now, and people want to see them available to their children and grandchildren.

"... driving distance from Melbourne. Makes a great day trip and allows you to get out in nature, which is so important when you live in a built-up urban area" as well as "...the health and social benefits of outdoor activity."

Carbon and Climate

Carbon and climate was raised by 11% of respondents with discussion focusing on carbon storage, refuge, extinctions, survival, health, renewables and providing areas for native flora and fauna to live. Forests were described as vital to store carbon and as a key to stabilising the environment. Protection of threatened species was also a theme throughout these comments, and mention was also made of the social and economic impacts of forests for carbon sinks and climate change. These comments support the role of forests in the environment, and a desire for the forests to be protected to enable these roles to continue.

Economic Opportunities and Resources

Economic opportunities and resources from forests were highlighted by nearly 10% of respondents. They describe the forest as a resource for many things from natural therapy to medical research to timber production and tourism. Discussion revolved around continued sustainability and local management of forested areas. There was differing views about the best way to manage these economic opportunities, with some wanting end native forest timber production, whilst others wanted this industry to continue.

Cultural and Natural Heritage

Preservation of Australia's cultural and natural heritage, history and knowledge was a smaller topic with around 5% of responses directly mentioning Traditional Owners, history, connecting to spirit, memories and icons. Respondents discussed the importance of the areas that not only hold cultural and historical significance for Aboriginal people but also were important for the community on multiple levels.

"...as a place to bring community together for cultural events and maintenance as well as providing jobs".

Workshops

Introduction

Over 120 face to face engagement events, including workshops and drop in sessions were conducted across the state between December 2018 and March 2019. These events captured the views of stakeholders and communities in locations across Victoria and were designed to complement the online survey. They were undertaken specifically to hear from a range of interest groups and from the general public through existing community activities. The events provided opportunities for peak bodies, stakeholders and local communities to share what they care about and prioritise for Victoria's forests. Events were held in key towns around the state and conversations were had at community and regional farmers markets, expos, fetes and festivals. Some events were intended to raise awareness of the engagement process occurring and to draw the public to the Engage Victoria platform to provide feedback, and others were specifically designed to collect feedback from participants.

Infographic summary

What is your vision for managing Victorian forests?

01

Health, conservation and management of our forests

02

Reform, review and transparent decision making

03

Continued access to recreation

Attendees were asked how they would like to see our forests managed in the future. Their aspirations included better health and conservation of our forests including improved management. In regards to reform, review and transparent decision making, there were calls for improved compliance and regulatory frameworks, with participants directly mentioning rangers, resourcing, consequences for poor behavior and monitoring. Continued access to recreation activities in the forest was also important to attendees.

Workshop Quotes:

"Forests 'managed' strategically for stability and sustainability and optimised for production of high quality water, enhancement of biodiversity and controlling pests."

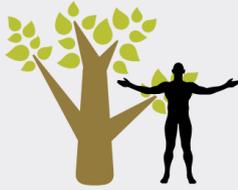
"Agencies and the community will work together to monitor and evaluate the condition of natural resources" and "the government really needs to listen to the values of the community."

"More campsites opened and maintained, more bike trails."

Workshop summary

What do you love, care about or prioritise about Victoria's forests?

01



Experiencing and enjoying nature

02



Access to recreation

03



Protect the biodiversity, flora and fauna

Workshop attendees were asked what do you love, care about or prioritise about Victoria's forests. Here strong themes included valuing the natural environment and connection with nature. The most common activity referenced was walking and an appreciation for being in a natural environment. Related to connection with nature, was the value derived from recreational use of the forest including activities such as camping, riding, fishing and hunting. The protection of biodiversity was a priority relating to climate change and the role of the forest.

Workshop Quotes:

"Good to get in the bush, away from city rush, be part of the environment."

"Low impact and passive recreational experiences available for the public."

"Wildlife, fauna and the natural environment should be preserved."

Workshops summary

- Workshop attendees were asked '*What do you love, care about or prioritise about Victoria's forests*' (please see figure 9). Themes that emerged from these questions included valuing the *natural environment and connection with nature* (29%). The most common activity referenced was walking and an appreciation for being in a natural environment. Related to connection with nature was the value derived from *recreational use* of the forest (19%) including activities such as camping, riding, fishing and hunting. The protection of *biodiversity* (16%) was a priority relating to climate change and the role of the forest in mitigating climate change impacts.
- When workshop attendees were asked '*What is your vision for managing Victorian forests*' (please see figure 10), their aspirations included, better *forest ecosystem health and biodiversity* (38%) and *reformative and transparent decision making* (20%). There were also calls for improved compliance and regulatory frameworks, with participants directly mentioning rangers, resourcing, and monitoring. Continued *recreational use* (17%) was also important to attendees.

What do you love, care about or prioritise about Victoria's forests?

There were 164 comments about values about Victoria's forests. The themes of these discussions were as follows:

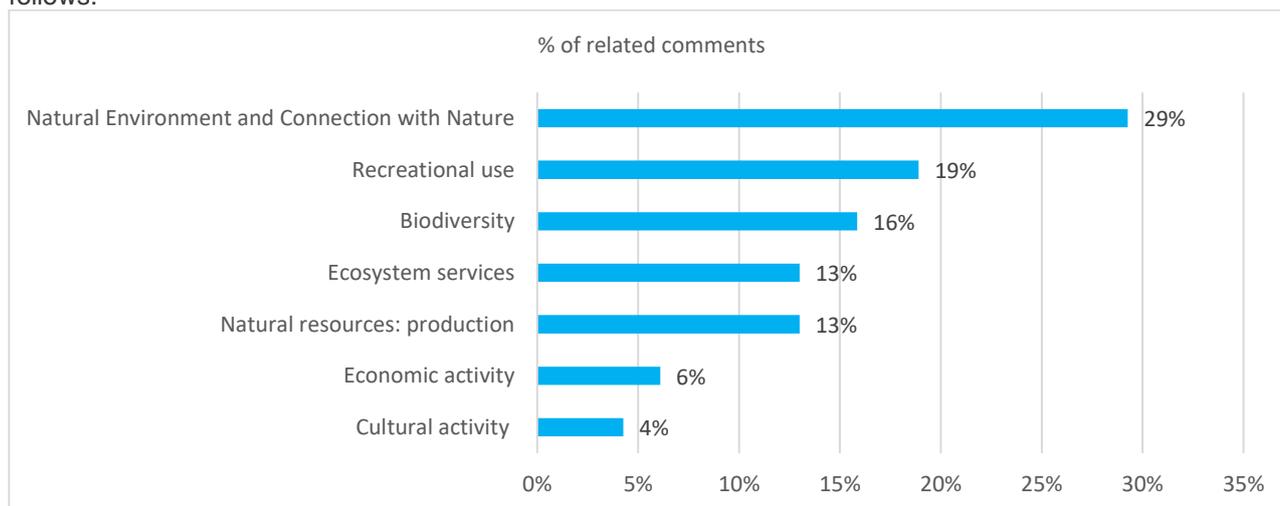


Figure 9: What do you love, care about or prioritise about Victoria's forests? Number of respondents answered: 164

Natural Environment and Connection with Nature

When asked '*What do you love, care about or prioritise about Victoria's forests*', over a quarter (29%) of participants valued the *natural environment and connection with nature* that forests provide them.

"Good to get in the bush, away from city rush, be part of environment", and that they "...enjoy being in the outdoors with my family".

Participants directly mentioned terms including respect, open, wildlife, impact, landscape, access and escape. The most common activity referenced was walking and an appreciation for being in a natural environment.

Recreational Use

Related to connection with nature was the value derived from recreational use of the forest. One in five (19%) discussed *recreational use*, including activities such as camping, riding, fishing, four wheel driving and hunting. People referenced trails, mountains, access and free as things they enjoyed and valued.

"Low impact and passive recreational experiences available for the public" as well as asking for "...more free camping, conservation & access."

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Much of the discussion centered around *biodiversity* (16%) and *ecosystem services* (13%), particularly relating to climate change and the role of the forest. There were common themes of pollution, rubbish collection, water, old growth forest and impacts of fire management and logging.

“Need to consider climate change in planning and management” and “I want better compliance monitoring as people leave rubbish in the forests.”

Participants agreed on the beauty and scenic value of the forest and wanted to protect and keep it sustainable.

Natural Resources Production and Economic Value

The production and economic value of forests was also important, with 13% of participants mentioning the value of *natural resources: production* and a further 6% mentioning *economic activity* as something they value about Victoria's forests. Key terms included income, opportunities, tourism, job and vibrant economies. The timber industry was frequently mentioned, alongside firewood collection, and land management.

“We are woodworkers and value the forest being sustainable.” and one participant said forests, *“...are our supermarket, medicine cabinet and our hardware store.”*

Cultural Activity

A small number of participants (around 4%) discussed the cultural value connected to Victoria's forests, saying they value *experiencing the heritage and historical sites*, and that *“cultural activity should be respected”*. The most common term was Traditional Owners, with participants asking for partnership.

“The traditional owners should have a say in the future management of our forests.”

What is your vision for managing Victorian forests?

There were 423 comments in response to the question 'What is your vision for managing Victorian forests'. All percentages refer to this number, unless otherwise stated.

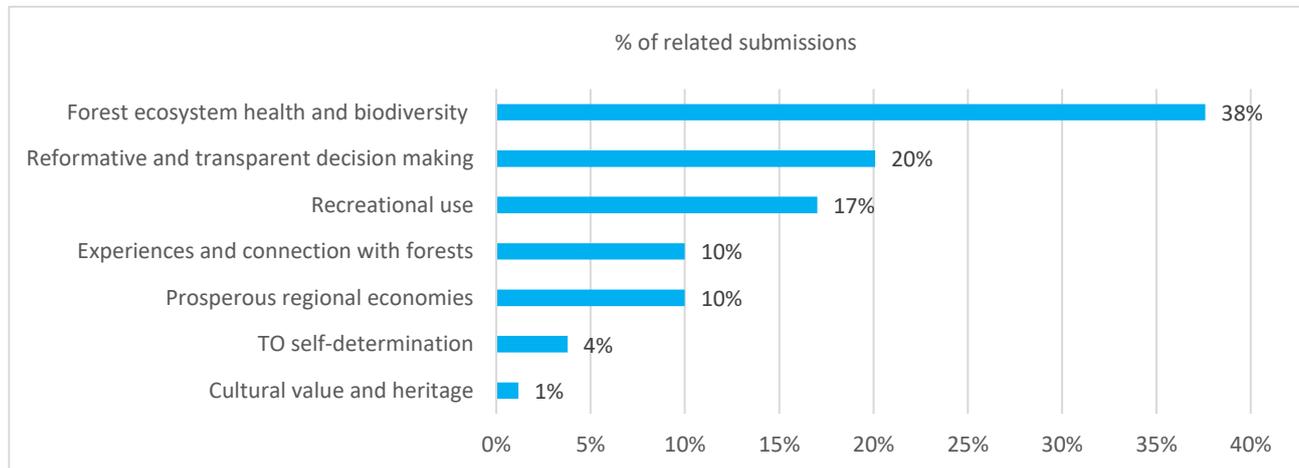


Figure 10: What is your vision for managing Victorian forests?. Number of comments: 423

Ecosystem Health and Biodiversity

Over a third (38%) of responses centred on *forest ecosystem health and biodiversity*. People wanted to see healthy forested areas, protection, maintenance and management of forests, particularly as it related to native species, wildlife, habitats and conservation.

"Forests 'managed' strategically for stability and sustainability and optimised for production of high quality water, enhancement of biodiversity and controlling pests (i.e. Ecosystem services)..."

Other participants wanted to see long term management practices in place.

"Forests are managed that recognise appropriate economy activity is accepted but that in the long-term healthy forests have a higher over-riding value for the future."

Other key terms mentioned included climate, future, impact and balance.

Reformative and Transparent Decision-Making

Around 20% of responses focused on reform, review and transparent decision making. Participants discussed the relationship between community and government.

"Agencies and the community will work together to monitor and evaluate the condition of natural resources" and stating that "the government really needs to listen to the values of the community".

There were calls for improved compliance and regulatory frameworks, with participants directly mentioning rangers, resourcing, consequences and monitoring. Participants were concerned with involvement, listening, engagement, relationships, understanding and implementation.

Recreational Use

Some participants (17%) discussed their vision for *recreational use* of forests.

“Important to have pristine and undisturbed forest available for camping and swimming” and desiring a “place to take family and friends to relax, enjoy”.

As seen previously, the most common activities included biking, four-wheel driving, hunting, fishing, prospecting, hiking and walking. People wanted to see forests which allowed a variety of activities.

“...all Victorians and Australians to be able to participate in activities of all sorts.”

They were also concerned with access and keeping forests open as well as hoping to see more free camping and an increased numbers of campsites.

Experiences and Connection

Related to recreational enjoyment, participants (around 10%) discussed their vision as it related to *experiences and connection with forests*. Directly mentioned was education and the role of young people and children in the future of forests.

“More education programs with DELWP and Parks.”

Protection, conservation, value and appreciation were mentioned frequently, alongside prevention, impact, inspiration and encourage.

“Low impact tracks and trails, signage, interpretative signage such as Traditional Owner Food Trails to enable low impact visitation” and, “Urban people better valuing and appreciating forests including the ecology, recreation, forestry, cultural aspects of forests.”

Prosperous and Regional Economies

The economy was a discussion point in around 10% of responses. The key industries mentioned were timber, tourism, agriculture and plantations, with some discussion of the value of firewood and hunting. There were concerns around *jobs* and how the economic benefits from forest industries are distributed.

“...money leaves the local community” which was echoed by another stating the need to *“Address the issue of timber production profits going out of the local communities...”*

There were calls for certainty and clarity for the timber industry, local community and *“local government's role in forest management...”* Other economic discussion centered around the future and climate, with participants discussing the value of forests for carbon storage and other forest-based industries such as tourism.

Traditional Owners Self Determination

A small number of responses (around 4%) discussed the role and involvement of Traditional Owners, with a few mentions to *cultural value and heritage*. Participants were predominantly concerned with relationship building and self-determination.

“Value the involvement of Traditional Owners in all steps along the way of the modernisation process and with the future management as part of a real partnership”.

Other suggestions included cultural assessments, signage and visibility of Traditional Owner involvement, and education.

Youth Symposium

Introduction

The Youth Symposium was a one-day event held on 28 March 2019 at the Footscray Community Arts Centre, bringing together a diverse representation of young people from across Victoria discuss the future management of our forests. Independent facilitators with experience working with young people were engaged to facilitate the event.

Forty-nine young people attended, representing 22 key stakeholder organisations across Victoria, including environmental groups, recreational users, the science community, Traditional Owners, industry groups and general youth organisations. Delegates were aged between 10-25 years of age.

The Youth Symposium provided an important opportunity for the Victorian Government to hear the views of young Victorians and engage them in a timely conversation about the future of Victoria's forests.

The Symposium provided the following important opportunities:

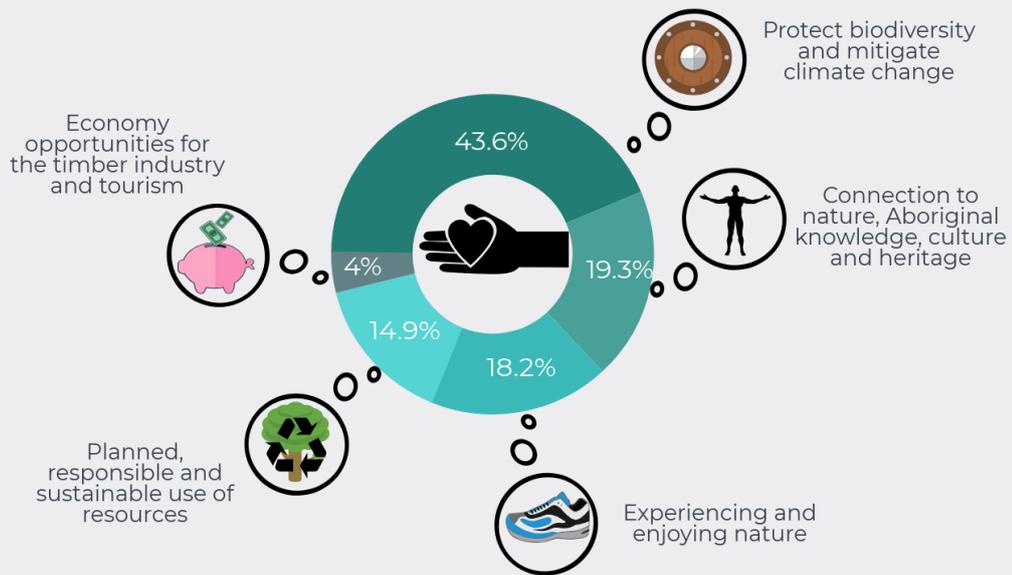
- To gain an understanding of the views of young Victorians to inform the renewal process for the RFAs and Victoria's forests management system.
- To provide young people with a voice on how Victoria's future forests are managed for the future.
- To start a conversation to engage and inspire young people to increase their participation in forest management.

The Youth Symposium had 397 comments from the participants across the day. The young people were asked what their values and aspirations were, and what specific actions needed to be taken in relation to forests under the following themes:

- Natural Environment
- Cultural identity
- Experience and recreation
- Resources Livelihood and Economy

Youth Symposium summary

What is important to you in terms of our forests?



Young people were asked what was important to them in terms of our forests. Values that emerged were protecting biodiversity and water, mitigating climate change, maintaining a healthy planet and awareness and knowledge of the forests. Also significant were values related to recreation and experiences of nature, including getting involved in nature, enjoying the variety of scenery, the pristine nature of forests and spending time with family and friends. Connection to nature, cultural heritage and appreciation and presence with surroundings was another significant area of value for young people.

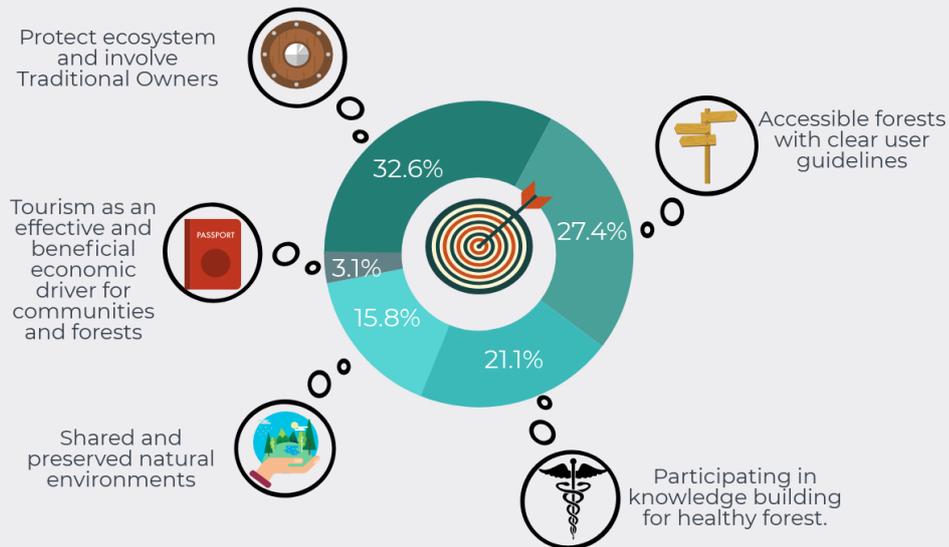
Youth Symposium Values:

"(An) ...holistic approach to climate change that considers the forest, water, economy, industry etc."

"(We) ...want the forests to be here in the future and this enables tourism and recreation as well as protecting flora and fauna."

"Connection to nature and peace - natural beauty is irreplaceable."

How would you like to see our forests in the future?



Young people were asked how they would like to see our forests in the future. Their aspirations included protecting ecosystems in conjunction with listening to Traditional Owners, and providing a supportive habitat for wildlife. In regard to recreation in the forests, they envisioned clear guidelines to follow, people respecting guidelines and making it easier for people to access time in the forests, allowing time in nature to be a normalised part of life. Additionally they would like to see shared spaces, preservation, equity and integrity for the forests.

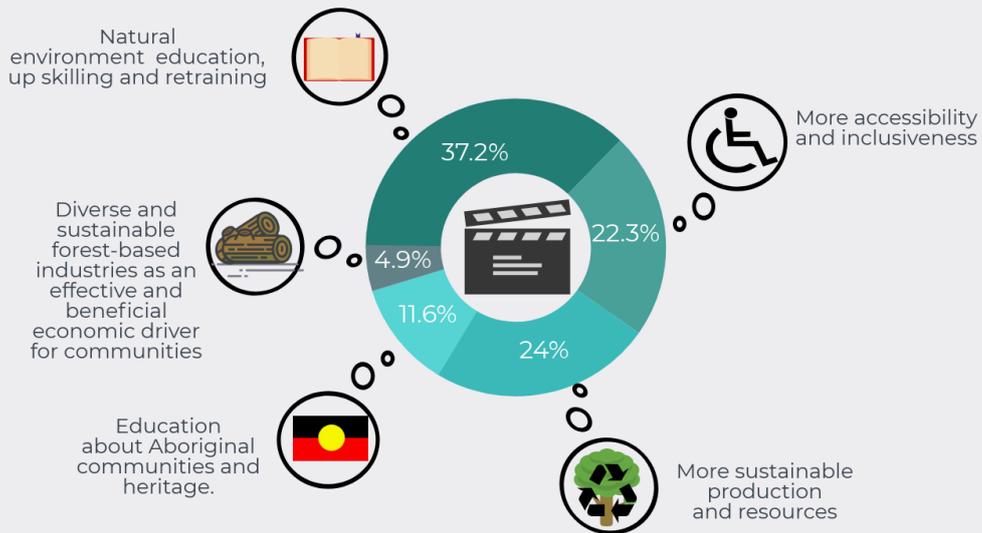
Youth Symposium Aspirations:

"The community want to know about Traditional Owner values and knowledge."

"Maintain accessibility without impacting the wild nature."

"An informed community who understands the importance and interconnectedness of the forest."

What specific actions would like to see to achieve your vision for the future?



Young people were asked what specific actions they would like to see to achieve their vision for the future. Their top actions included natural environment education including, upskilling and retraining and more accessibility and inclusiveness especially for children, persons with and without disabilities and schools. In regard to production and resources, they wanted this managed in a more sustainable way. Additionally, more education about Aboriginal communities and heritage.

Youth Symposium Actions:

"Education about use of forest, species, importance of protecting."

"Support for hunting better resources to areas, ability to process and sell meat."

"If people know more about indigenous knowledge and heritage. They would care more to recognise spiritual connection to country."

Youth Symposium summary

Young people were asked ‘*What is important to you in terms of our forests?*’:

- The top value that emerged was to *protect biodiversity and mitigate climate change*. *Connection to nature, Aboriginal knowledge, culture and heritage* were other values young people cared about. Values relating to recreation and experiences of nature, including getting involved in nature, enjoying the variety of scenery, the pristine nature of forests and spending time with family and friends in nature were also expressed as being highly important.

When young people were asked ‘*How would you like to see our forests in the future?*’ their aspirations included:

- *Protecting the ecosystem and involving Traditional Owners, participating in knowledge building for healthy forest*. Regarding recreation in forests, they envisioned clear guidelines to follow, people respecting guidelines and making it easier for people to access time in the forests, allowing time in nature to be a normalised part of life.

Young people were asked ‘*What specific actions would like to see to achieve your vision for the future?*’:

- Top actions included *natural environment education, upskilling and retraining and more accessibility and inclusiveness* especially for children, persons with and without disabilities and schools. Regarding more sustainable production and resources, they wanted this managed in a more sustainable way. Additionally, young people sought more *education about Aboriginal communities and heritage*.

This section has been broken up in the categories of values aspirations and actions, youth symposium respondents were asked questions around these categories under the following themes:

- Natural Environment
- Cultural Identity
- Experience and Recreation
- Resources Livelihood and Economy

Values

“*What is important to you in terms of our forests?*”

Values centered strongly on *natural environment* and *cultural identity*.

Natural Environment

80 of 186 comments about values

The natural environment was commented on by most of the participants in the youth symposium, with terms like biodiversity, sustainable, management, and native species. Participants spoke about values of water, mitigating climate change, cultural practices, maintaining and creating a healthy planet and awareness and knowledge of the forests.

Example quotes below:

“*Biodiversity – healthy planet, keeping all the animals alive and their habitat.*”

“*Look at the root causes of climate change to address problems at the source.*”

Cultural Identity

49 of 186 comments about values

Specific mention was made of Traditional Owners and spiritual connection regarding the forests.

Values expressed included connection to nature, culture, heritage and appreciation of surroundings. Additionally, memories, history, connection and roots were cited as being of value.

Example quotes below:

"If people know more about indigenous knowledge and heritage. They would care more to recognise spiritual connection to country."

"Connection to nature and peace natural beauty is irreplaceable"

Experience and Recreation

36 of 186 comments about values

Young people nominated many of the same activities as other respondents including camping, fishing, hiking, bird watching and four-wheel driving. They also mentioned new activities of rock climbing, art and kayaking. They expressed the values of being able to get involved in nature, enjoying the variety of scenery, the pristine nature of forests and spending time with family and friends.

Example quotes below:

"Want the forests to be here in the future and this enables tourism and recreation as well as protecting flora and fauna."

"Mental health of being outdoors, physical health."

Resources Livelihood and Economy

35 of 186 comments about values

The role of the forest in production and resources and how to produce these in a more sustainable way was commented on by some respondents. Future planning was a key theme with recycling, sharing, support, protection and leadership also discussed. Values of the importance of resources, innovation, responsibility and economic activity were expressed.

As in other questions, a small number mentioned livelihood and economy (8 comments). The main theme of this discussion was that of the timber industry. Timber was described as a sustainable resource (and superior alternative to plastics and metals) however there was disparity amongst the young people as to the best source of that timber with most calling for a transition to plantations. There was also some reference to tourism services as positive for the economy.

Example quotes below:

"Transition to softwood plantations from hardwood trees is possible and skill transfer is possible. Transition can ensure livelihood can be sustainable"

"Tourism is an effective and beneficial economic driver for communities (e.g. marathons, forest events, discovery centres)."

Aspirations

“How would you like to see our forests in the future?”

Participants had firm aspirations for the natural environment and experience and recreation. A smaller, but important, theme was that of cultural identity and a small number of participants also discussed livelihood and economy. There is a shift of young people’s priorities here towards experience and recreation, whereas in values cultural identity was rated higher than experience and recreation.

Natural Environment

31 of 95 comments about aspirations

The natural environment was commented on by most of the participants in the youth symposium, with terms like biodiversity, sustainable, management, and native species.

Example quotes below:

“Holistic approach to climate change that considers the forest, water, economy, industry etc.”

“Listen to Traditional owners - plantations - need to still consider the ecosystem.”

Experience and recreation

26 of 95 comments about aspirations

Young people’s aspirations included clear guidelines and respect for guidelines, making it easier for people to access opportunities and a vision that it’s people to go outside to spend time in nature.

Example quotes below:

“More clear info about what hikes are available and the different levels of ability/difficulty.”

“More casual recreational activities that people can attend spontaneously rather than organised tours.”

Cultural identity

15 of 95 comments about aspirations

When discussing their aspirations for cultural identity responses included shared spaces, future use, preservation, equity and integrity.

Example quotes below:

“Indigenous people having connection to environment, not having values compromised.”

“The community want to know about traditional owner values and knowledge.”

Resources Livelihood and Economy

23 of 95 comments about aspirations

The role of the forest in production and resources and how to use these in a more sustainable way was mentioned. Future planning was a key theme with recycling, sharing, support, protection and leadership also discussed. Aspirations included tourism, water catchments, understanding, building knowledge, healthy forest regions and youth participation.

A small number of young people (3) mentioned livelihood and economy. The main theme of this discussion was that of the timber industry, with some reference to tourism services. Tourism was well supported in this theme and throughout the consultation.

Example quotes below:

“Strong laws to protect forests but allow responsible industry.”

“Can’t stop industries - need to think about the jobs these industries support.”

Actions

“What specific actions would like to see to achieve your vision for the future?”

Actions centering on the natural environment was commented on the most, followed by resources livelihood and economy and experience and recreation. A smaller, but important, theme was that of cultural identity. Across nearly all themes increased education was mentioned.

Natural Environment

46 of 122 comments about actions

Actions discussed for the natural environment included education, up skilling and retraining people, effective fire management and more mapping. Other suggestions included permissions and restrictions of recreational accessibility and use, with specific attention given to plastics, human impact and water management.

Example quotes below:

“Education about use of forest, spices, importance of protecting - target young people.”

“Cleaning up dead material and fuel loads on the ground to take away fire risk.”

Experience and Recreation

27 of 122 comments about actions

Actions suggested to make accessibility easier included dedicating different parts of forest to different uses, having greater variety in transport options and considering ways of increasing inclusiveness, especially for children and inter-abled, and education for schools and community on forest use.

Example quotes below:

“Move information about recreational activities available in forests - currently difficult to find specific information.”

“DELWP should showcase why the forest is important and how you can engage with it in a accessible way.”

Cultural Identity

14 of 122 comments about actions

Specific mention was made of Traditional Owners and spiritual connection. This suggests an action of education to support better and wider understanding of the knowledge of Aboriginal communities and heritage.

Example quotes below:

“Move information about recreational activities available in forests - currently difficult to find specific information.”

“If people know more about indigenous knowledge and heritage they would care more to recognise spiritual connection to country.”

Resources Livelihood and Economy

35 of 122 comments about actions

The role of the forest in production and resources and how to use these in a more sustainable way was mentioned frequently. Suggested actions ranged from needing further research, open discussion “...that factors in different perspective and cultures”, adapting to the environment, and planning and transparency of decision-making.

A small number mentioned livelihood and economy. The main theme of this discussion was that of logging and the timber industry. Specific actions included suggestions to “change the dialogue”, to improve regulation and compliance in regard to the timber industry.

“Transfer from native forest logging and timber to plantations.”

“Support for hunting better access to areas, ability to process and sell meat.”

Submissions

Introduction

There was no formal submission process for the Phase 1 engagement, however 14 submissions were received, and this feedback has been included in this report.

Submissions were received from 10 individuals and 4 organisations:

1. Submitter 1 (Individual)
2. Submitter 2 Save Our Strathbogie Forest Campaign
3. Submitter 3 Victorian Apiarists Association
4. Submitter 4 (Individual)
5. Submitter 5 Rubicon Forest Protection Group
6. Submitter 6 (Individual)
7. Submitter 7 (Individual)
8. Submitter 8 (Individual)
9. Submitter 9 (Individual)
10. Submitter 10 (Individual)
11. Submitter 11 (Individual)
12. Submitter 12 (Individual)
13. Submitter 13 (Individual)
14. Submitter 14 Taungurung Land & Waters Council

Submitter 1 - Individual

The importance of:

- All key stakeholders in the Victorian community being engaged on forest management decisions.

“...such as, but not limited to, Local Government, forest resource-based industries (e.g. Timber, Apiary, Tourism), water resources industry (domestic, irrigation, environmental), natural resources conservation organisations and groups, and 4 wheel drive Associations to mention some”.

- Planning and decision-making being based on good science and rational decision-making.

“... future forest management decision making process there needs to be a clear authoritative listing of native animal and plant species that have been proven to have become extinct solely or primarily due to timber harvesting in native forests.”

- Good and consistent regulation, monitoring, reporting and improvement of forest ecosystem management systems and transparency about decision-making.

“To what extent is the evaluation of responses influenced by a ‘numbers game’ and ‘political influence’ rather than sound balanced evidence based social, economic, environmental and cultural evaluation?”

- Public education about forest ecosystems, their uses for people and the role of fire in the ecosystem.

“The wider community still generates a demand for native timber products such as flooring timbers, furniture, timber veneer products, mouldings and other speciality timber products. If native timber harvesting is to be phased out of Victoria’s public forests, does the State Government have a policy and program for alternative supply of native hardwood timber products, - and if so, what is this policy?”

Submitter 2 - Save Our Strathbogrie Forest Campaign

The following excerpt from this submission summarises the core proposal.

“The Strathbogrie Forest has been ignored for too long. The Victorian Government has the opportunity to capitalize on the strong community support and compelling weight of policy, which underpin the significant benefits of protecting the Strathbogrie Forest. Though modest in size, the statewide significance of this forest is now beyond argument. Its protection in a conservation reserve is urgently required for meeting National Reserve System targets, Victorian Government protection commitments and for the survival of iconic national and state endangered fauna species. Forest protection will provide, not only significant biodiversity outcomes, but demonstrable support for regional communities, a genuine commitment to people caring about nature, improved visitor experience, and increased tourism opportunity.

Regional communities and businesses want protection of the natural environment and the benefits of sustainable economic development, particularly the burgeoning economies around nature-based tourism - these will return real benefits to regional Victoria. Save Our Strathbogrie Forest recommends that the Victorian Government enable the formal protection of the Strathbogrie Forest under the National Parks Act, encompassing all of the existing State Forest and other associated public land.”

Submitter 3 - Victorian Apiarists Association

The Victorian Apiarists Association (VAA) noted the reliance of the Victorian beekeeping industry on “access to native flora abundance when it sporadically occurs statewide”. They aspire to continued arrangements for long-term, sustainable operations and equitable coexistence for both the timber and beekeeping industries.

Submitter 4 – Individual

Stated a desire for the following forest classifications to continue: GMZ, SPZ, SMZ*.

Requested that *Landscape Based Management* be supported and for there to be a stop to the replacement of GMZ with SPZ. Calls for Zoning decisions to be informed by peer reviewed, undisputed and agreed science/data/evidence; and no detection based management zones.

Wish for the public to be informed and educated about GMZ.

**(these refer to zones created within State forests, of Special Protection Zone (SPZ), Special Management Zone (SMZ) or General Management Zone (GMZ)). Each of these has different activities allowed within them and are influenced by management plans.*

Submitter 5 - Rubicon Forest Protection Group

There are grounds for skepticism in view of the failures of the Forest Industry Taskforce but the promised consultation around the new ‘modernised’ RFAs provides an opportunity to progress the reform of the regulatory framework governing Victoria’s Ash forests.

“The RFPG has developed this discussion paper as a contribution policy debate around Forest Governance Reform. The paper includes three parts:

- the failings of the current regime of forest governance: issues which must be addressed*
- how we got where we are now: the forces supporting the continuing destruction of native forests*
- proposals: a program of action for forest governance reform (including revision of the Code).*

Submitter 6 - Individual

Undergrowth is being ineffectively managed to prevent bushfires

Need to let local experience influence management decisions

“Am horrified at management of our Parks and Forests, the so called damage that cattle and horses are supposed to do so the brilliant idea of removing them has resulted in more bushfires as the undergrowth grows wild. The flooding by National Parks at unseasonable times results in brumbies and wildlife starving to death and ridiculous notices advising not to feed in the park, just let them all starve. These are what our Government has achieved with their so called management, let the local people who have years of experience be the advisers in the management of our forests, not mostly office bound city dwellers who have no idea of the impact of their decisions, who do not care about the values of the real Aussie people who do live in and around our parks and value our heritage.”

Submitter 7– Individual

- Would like to see Brumbies remain in Barmah National Park

“Simple let the Barmah Brumbies remain in the National Park. The local community has been hit hard enough with the cattle gone the logging gone and now Parks Vic want the last bit of value out - our Brumbies. They're a heritage horse linking back to when our diggers went off to war - these were their horses released out in what was called the common. They remained as a lot didn't return from war to collect their horses - that's how they began. Our family only goes to camp there because of the brumbies, take that away and it would be horrendous. I do agree with a management plan, but it must be a plan in consultation with the Barmah Brumby Preservation Group.”

Submitter 8 – Individual

- Concerned that Parks Victoria have a differing management approach

“Parks Victoria can't manage what they have already got and won't listen to anyone who has a different opinion to them. Just look at Barmah Forest, it is a disgraceful mess.”

Submitter 9 – Individual

- Importance of managing for all species

“Our forests are ecological systems where all the species within are important for their continued existence. For example - Sustainable forest management must consider fungi and invertebrates to be at least as important as vascular plants.”

Submitter 10 – Individual

- Concern about the management of forests in the Strzelecki Ranges.

“There are areas of forest controlled by Hancock's in the Strzelecki's that should be better protected. The process for them handing over corridor areas of significance has been very slow. In particular, some of the forest in the cores and links is to be the subject of logging before it is returned. There is so little pristine forest left. It is profoundly sad that it is to be logged”.

Submitter 11 – Individual

- Need for balanced multi-use forest management that includes sustainable timber production and environmental protection.

“Through the RFA process there needs to be a balance between environmental protection and sustainable timber production. The forest industry is an important part of regional communities that utilises a valuable natural resource providing benefits to all Victorians. By sustainably using our local natural resource to produce furniture, structural timber and paper we can rely less on international importation of timber from non-certified and unsustainable sources.”

Submitter 12 – Individual

- The online survey was biased against forest utilisation in that it did not allow respondents to express views particularly about multiple use management of the forests.
- The survey had been designed for an either/or approach and with a single focus.
- At the workshop were some very experienced forest managers who believed that it is possible to continue to manage the East Gippsland forests for multiple uses as has been the case in the past and has been done very effectively for the last 20 years under the provisions of the East Gippsland Forest Management Plan 1998.

“One of the discussion points at that meeting was that the online survey was biased against forest utilisation and that it did not allow respondents to express views particularly about multiple use management of the forests. The feeling of those present at the meeting was that the survey had been designed for an either/or approach and with a single focus.”

Submitter 13 - Individual

- RFA survey, is poor and without context. No constructive relevant consultation from the full range of stakeholders.
- The design appears to be constructed to deliver an outcome rather than consult.

“The design of the RFA survey, is poor and without context. It does not enable constructive relevant consultation from the full range of stakeholders. The design, whether deliberate or not, appears to be constructed to deliver a particular outcome rather than consult. The management of forests is complex and cannot be simplified into a few narrowly focused phrases or photos.”

Submitter 14 - Taungurung Land & Waters Council

The following excerpt from this submission summarises the core proposal. It calls for the protection of Snobs Creek from the impacts of timber harvesting.

The main concern is that the Snobs Creek fish populations would be severely impacted by the timber harvesting activities due to:

- consistent low water temperatures and water purity critical for the survival and reproduction of trout.
- Low evaporation due to the heavily timbered slopes and steepness of Snobs Creek valley.
- year-round water supply

“We have good drone footage of the creek, the falls, and the logging activity. They are powerful images of what needs to be protected and how logging changes the landscape drastically. We need to promote more sustainable activities. There is potential in the area for another kind of activities, including improving access to the falls, creating walking tracks, research regarding cultural heritage, etc. We have found landholders with such passion for protecting the creeks from harmful activities and are eager to work with Taungurung to do so.”

Appendices

- 1. Verbatim Vision Comments**
- 2. Survey Questions**
- 3. Workshop Organisation Attendees**
- 4. Youth Symposium Organisation Attendees**