

APPENDIX 2 ISSUES RAISED DURING CONSULTATION

A range of consultative opportunities has been undertaken to obtain community views and aspirations that need to be considered in developing a RFA for the North East. Following the release of the CRA reports public meetings were held in Corryong on 1 September and 27 October, in Myrtleford on 2 September and 28 October, and in Mansfield on 3 September and 29 October 1998. In addition, meetings with State stakeholder groups were held in Melbourne on 9 September and 16 October 1998. Other meetings have taken place with various interest groups, both in Melbourne and the North East. A number of people and organisations also provided written comments and information. The issues raised through these processes are outlined below and are broadly classified into those related to the RFA process, the CAR reserve system, ecologically sustainable forest management, certainty and development for forest industries, and community issues. Some issues covered more than one category.

A number of the issues, though important in a broader regional context, are not directly related to the RFA process or outcomes and there is limited ability to address them within the RFA. The RFA process has highlighted some of these issues and has provided information that could be used to support action to address them, including potential access to programs identified in [Appendix 4](#).

Some of the issues were raised by individuals, while others were put by representatives of various groups. As such it is not possible for the information provided below to gauge the representativeness of each issue. The comments and issues raised do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commonwealth or Victorian governments. Members of the RFA team responded to most of the issues when they were raised or they are addressed elsewhere in this report so responses are not reiterated below.

Many of the following issues were also raised during workshops, meetings and discussions conducted as part of the social assessment work undertaken prior to the development of the CRA report.

RFA PROCESS

- Federal parliament processes for agreeing on the RFA.
- The difference that RFAs will make to the controversy over forests.
- The relationship between the RFA and ECC box-ironbark study.
- Achieving JANIS targets either regionally or State wide.
- The status of the RFA legislation. Concern that politicians will change RFAs.
- Who writes the Directions report.
- Representation of the community on the Steering Committee.
- Availability of timber resource data.
- Would sustainable yield be completed before the RFA.
- Reporting of public opinion in the CRA Report eg. Wongungarra catchment and Stanley Plateau.
- Availability of the Social Assessment report.
- Clarification of the consultation process and the timing of future meetings, reports and for lodging submissions.
- Availability of digital information to the public for developing options.
- Will the Directions Report contain options.
- Timing of stakeholder input for consideration in options.
- Concern that red gum forests are not included in RFAs.
- Whilst the RFA process is behind schedule it places industry at a competitive disadvantage to regions with RFAs.
- Whether the RFA will be subject to national competition policy and if any options are inconsistent with the national competition policy whether they need to be changed.
- The process for review of RFAs.
- How will plantations feature in the final agreement.
- The relationship of the Forest Management Plan and RFA. Whether the RFA looks at future management and maintaining reserves.

COMPREHENSIVE, ADEQUATE AND REPRESENTATIVE RESERVE SYSTEM

- Addition of the Wongungarra and Stanley Plateau to the dedicated reserve system.
- The reservation levels of the large areas of old-growth documented in the CRA report.
- Interconnection of reserves by wildlife corridors.
- The need for information and financial incentives to encourage people to manage and conserve endangered EVCs on their property.
- Active Landcare groups are willing to conserve environmental values though they need to be advised on which EVCs are endangered so that they can be protected. Seed collection from endangered EVCs is one way to expand them.
- The use of carbon credits to subsidise revegetation of rare, endangered and vulnerable communities.
- How old-growth forest and wilderness are determined and the amount to be protected.
- Management of Special Protection Zones.
- The relevance of the Spotted Tree Frog to the region.
- The reason why Wongungarra is not rated as wilderness in the report.
- Query on whether mining heritage is covered in detail.
- The status of the national estate assessment and how it will reflect existing values and any new information.
- Does the RFA look at private land for EVC protection.
- Are the endangered, vulnerable and rare EVCs addressed at the national or regional level.
- The level of precision in the pre-1750 extent of Ecological Vegetation Classes.
- Concern that in the Central Highlands region there was no clear statement of socio-economic value of the areas to be included in the CAR reserve system, and whether for the North East region this information will be available to stakeholders.
- Social and economic assessment of reserve options(what ifs).

ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANNING

- Blackberry control, Mistletoe and weed control .
- Fox control and feral animal control.
- Management of water harvesting and maintenance of water quality.
- Funding on research into development of native species for wood production.
- Availability of NHT funding for weed control, particularly blackberries.
- The level of government assistance to volunteer fire fighting groups given that fire management requirements increase with expansion of commercial pine plantations.
- Research on the effect of fuel reduction burning on weeds, fuel reduction and species composition.
- How sustainable yield is calculated.
- The community should support NRE fuel reduction programs - they protect lives and property.
- The spread of pines into native forests.
- Approval process for harvesting pine plantations, particularly those near Bright.
- Access to wilderness areas, especially for fuel reduction burning.
- A roadside management plan is being prepared regionally but pasture grasses are out-competing native vegetation communities along roadsides.
- Future management of horse riding.
- How the RFA determines the details of forest use.
- The duration of Forest Management Plans.
- Harvesting of native forest more sustainable than plantation monocultures.
- Removal of forest waste destructive to ecology.
- An update on the 5 point plan for indigenous heritage protection.
- Concern that the statement on page 177 of the North East CRA report regarding fire management research in the Wombat forest is not valid to the North East, due to a difference in understorey species.
- Regarding input into private land, what place does the RFA have in the plantations programs.
- Does the RFA take into account regional catchment strategies.

- The level of biodiversity be maintained.
- Existing RFAs, world class reserve system, and industry activities conducted in a sustainable manner.
- There are other values to economics. Biodiversity is declining. Would like to see no timber harvesting as it has affected the aesthetics and biodiversity of the area. Recently discovered vulnerable species at Stanley.
- What happens to biodiversity after a wildfire like the 1939 fire.
- Comment on fuel reduction burning occurring adjacent to private property 3 times in 6 years which has eliminated heath species.

DEVELOPMENT FOR FOREST INDUSTRIES AND CERTAINTY

- Collection of bush foods and medicines is not mentioned in the report as another forest use. Examples include St Johns Wort, English Broom, wildflowers, and truffles.
- The ecological benefits of plantations of native species.
- Mount Beauty sawmill utilises 100 per cent of sawlog with 80 per cent being value added.
- The Wongungarra is important for the timber industry as it has mature alpine ash resource.
- There is potential to increase timber production from forests through the use of portable sawmills.
- Incentives for landholders to increase timber production from existing holdings and to increase the size of their plantations.
- Currently industry is relying on mature resource, once this is exhausted regrowth will be mature enough to harvest.
- Maintaining current levels of harvesting.
- There is no guarantee that 15 year licence quantities will be met. Concern about availability and future licence commitments eg. licensee in Wangaratta FMA is having to source timber from Central FMA at the present time, due to constraints imposed by protection of Long-footed Potoroo.
- Future resource availability from the Buffalo area.
- The DFA areas set aside for Long Footed Potoroo need to be reconsidered and policies need to take into account the social assessment findings.
- Restrictions on harvesting in DFA areas are having significant impacts on industry in the North East. A study needs to be undertaken on impacts of harvesting on Potoroo. The Potoroo found in Cabbage Tree area where timber and other activities are taking place.
- Include in the RFA a commitment to a minimum volume, quality and species as provided in the Central Highland RFA, and that future changes would be on a resource neutral basis.
- Status quo or reduction in land base. Industry is looking for a growth option. Thinning to increase from available land base eg. round wood not fully utilised and governments should be developing markets.
- Whether cattle grazing would increase or decrease.
- The relative value of tourism and timber production in the region.
- Relative priority for timber harvesting or mining where these two uses conflict.
- Concern about an information bias due to the value of mining would be greater than indicated by the 36 active licences .
- Concern that the social assessment telephone survey targeted people living in the region. Concern that the conclusion in the CRA report chapter on social assessment, that a change in timber industry will adversely affect people was not supported by the data presented in that chapter, particularly the data in Table 11.1.
- The CRA report does not sufficiently highlight the importance of tourism on the Stanley Plateau.
- The sustainability of harvesting given that the report says that 65 per cent of harvested Ash is regrowth and 35 per cent is from mature forest.
- The tourism and recreation assessment has not referred to deer hunting which is a significant use in the North East.
- Deer hunting is excluded from some National Parks. Foothill forests are becoming good for deer hunting. Would the RFA set aside areas where deer hunting is excluded. If reserve areas are developed, then consideration needs to be given to allowing stalking etc. Deer could become a problem as vermin if there are restrictions on deer hunting.
- Whether there has been a study on population dynamics of deers.

- Carr government in Eden put forward \$6-7 million for a processing plant. Is the government putting forward proposals in the North East.
- The contribution Wongungarra makes to timber resources.
- The advantage of RFAs for the timber industry includes: meeting commitments, security with financial institutions, domestic and international markets, social and economic stability. Reluctance to commitment of investment development of new markets without guarantee provided by RFAs.
- The North East region does not have a full and complete residual market. Ability of Commonwealth and State governments to explore opportunities for markets.
- Encouraging firewood and running a power generation plant from residual timber.
- Consideration of opportunities for growth and development of industry eg thinnings, increased access, maintain current opportunities. Value adding provides for export opportunities.
- Examination of cross industry impacts.
- Enhancing production from existing land base.
- Change in the balance of land available for timber production since 1750 through to the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.
- Content of CRAs discuss employment and values, but there are gaps in offshoot industries eg furniture and tourism employment (eg. blacksmith, vets, horse rug makers, gold pan makers, etc)
- Economic spin off in towns from deer hunting.
- Importance of Beechworth region for endurance riding. Cannot ride horses on hard rock roads in plantation areas.
- If tourism expands more than the timber industry, would there be a change in the JANIS criteria.
- Inappropriate to compare tourism and logging figures in a small area.
- Small tourism operators in rural areas have increased with timber harvesting.
- Timber harvesting is taking more without generating jobs.
- Timber industry is sustainable and industry wish to continue on a sustainable basis. Keep it a multiple use forest for all to benefit.
- Employment increase - with value adding more jobs created for same volume than in the past.

OTHER ISSUES

- Tourism and timber harvesting industries are compatible.
- The volunteer bush fire brigades make a large contribution to the community and forestry operations in the bush assist in the work of the volunteer brigades.
- The interest of tourists in seeing impact of harvesting and regeneration.
- Restrictions on recreational and commercial prospecting.
- The community should do something to support tourism to make it viable, as the Legends, Wine and High Country is fledging.
- Ability for timber harvesting in Parks. Allow timber harvesting in Parks and use the royalties to purchase private land. If sustainable logging can occur outside of parks, why not inside parks.
- It is not a two way process of trading areas. Frogs have been surviving for hundreds of years.
- Have calculations for greenhouse gas and global warming been factored into the CRA.
- Object to the term 'certainty'.
- Questions about how tourist operations pay for roads that timber industry no longer access and pay for.