



Rescue the Rubicon!

Devastation in the Rubicon

The Rubicon State Forest and other state forests of the Central Highlands are being devastated by unsustainable, industrial-scale clear felling, despite huge forest losses in the Black Saturday bushfires. Mountain landscapes have been scarred for years to come, with swathes of mountain ash forest reduced to quasi-plantations.

Other forest values such as wildlife conservation, biodiversity, bushfire mitigation and outdoor recreation and tourism are being seriously compromised.

As with over-extraction of water for irrigation, the refusal to act on global warming, the pollution of our oceans, and clearing huge areas of natural forest for agriculture, excessive logging of Victoria's native forests amounts to intergenerational theft. While the native forest timber industry provides profits, jobs and export earnings, these are sustained by ecosystem impoverishment.

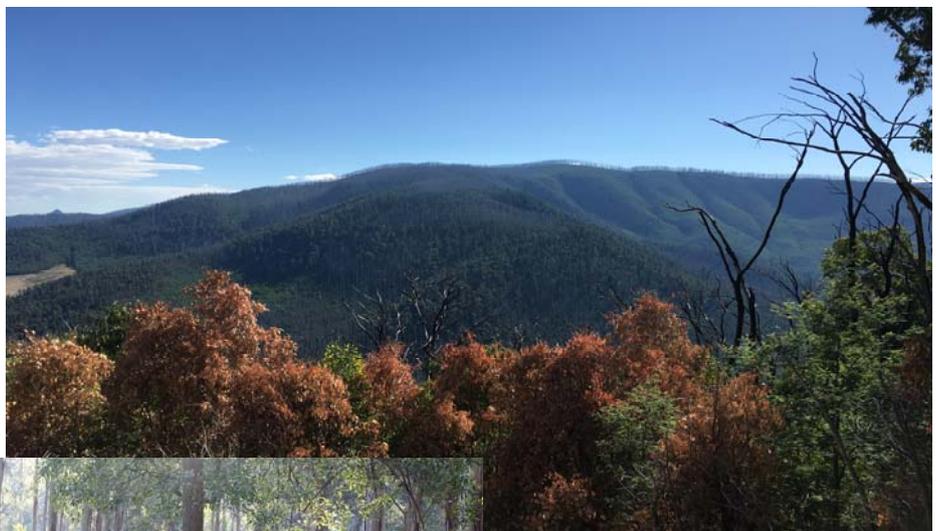
Act now: RFPG's six point plan

- Protect what remains!
- Promote forest tourism!
- Stop unsustainable logging!
- Hold the states accountable!
- Encourage the development of eucalypt plantations!
- Encourage the development and implementation of more efficient technologies for milling and manufacture!

Protect what remains

RFPG calls upon the Victorian Minister for the Environment to immediately end logging in the following areas in the Central FMA and declare them as reserves:

- the whole of the Torbreck Range to be joined with the Mt Torbreck reserve;
- the whole of the Snobs Creek catchment;
- the areas surrounding the Mt Bullfight Conservation Reserve to be joined with Lake Mountain including the headwaters of Snobs Creek, Royston River, Torbrek River and Arnold Creek extending south to Cambarville;
- the whole north end of the Blue Range and Middle Range to be joined with the Rubicon Valley Historic Area and reserved to protect this most north-easterly alpine ash outlier and adjoining forests;
- the Acheron Way to be recognised as a critical tourist road needing a much wider buffer and no further visible gashes;
- the Hermitage Creek area at Narbethong to be permanently reserved to protect the greater glider;
- all harvesting in the Rubicon Valley Historic Area should end.



Promote forest tourism!

RFPG calls upon the Victorian Department of Tourism and the Murrindindi Shire Council to:

- create an Aboriginal cultural heritage trail including Naah Naah Djong (the Cathedral Range) and early forced re-settlement sites for the Daungurung/Taungurung people;
- develop self-guided driving tours on the Plateau highlighting historic, ecological and geologically significant sites like the amazing Cerberean Cauldron;
- open up Royston Falls and Elephant Rock via a walk from the Power Station, and also open a track to Niagara falls below Snobs Creek falls;
- upgrade Tweed Spur track and Cathedral Lane/Chitty Ridge Track to 2WD standard to create a scenic drive connecting Cathedral Range State Park with the Rubicon State Forest;
- improve signposting and access to the Rubicon Historic Area;
- establish an historical display at the Rubicon Power Station;
- open the haulage line with a cog railway from Rubicon Power Station;
- establish mountain bike trails, incorporating aqueducts and trestle bridges;
- upgrade Barnewall Plains Rd to 2WD standard to improve access to Mt Torbreck.



Sculpture from Bruno's Sculpture Garden in Marysville

Stop unsustainable logging!

Since the 2009 fires logging in the Central Highlands has increased to completely unsustainable levels. Notwithstanding VicForests' foreshadowed reduction in harvesting (see VicForests' 2017 Resource Outlook) the threats to other values of the forests remain dire.

RFBG calls upon the Victorian Government

- to stop the unsustainable logging of native forests in Victoria;
- to revise the Code of Forest Practice and strengthen its enforcement;
- to revise the existing Allocation Order in accordance with the reduced harvesting estimates; and
- to revise the structure of the Allocation Order to that it is specified by Forest Management Area, as well as by ash and mixed species, based on each FMA's ecologically sustainable yield.

For further information regarding these policy directions see:

Regional Forest Agreements – Promise Betrayed!

The Code of Forest Practice – Unspecified and Unenforced!

The Allocation Order – Licence to Log!



Hold the states accountable

Under the regional forest agreements the Commonwealth completely abrogated its constitutional responsibilities for forest conservation and gave the states carte blanche over harvesting decisions.

RFPG calls upon the Commonwealth and the states to:

- scrap the regional forest agreements;
- commit to revising the National Forests Policy and to undertake a major community consultation around the revision;

RFPG calls upon the Victorian Government to:

- transfer obligations for enforcing the Code of Practice for Timber Production to an independent statutory body;
- make VicForests' operations subject to the Planning and Environment Act like all other enterprises; and
- enshrine in legislation the need for ecologically sustainable management of our public native forests.

For information on these policy directions see:

[Regional Forest Agreements – Promise Betrayed!](#)

[The National Forest Policy - Asleep at the Wheel!](#)



Encourage the development of eucalypt plantations!

Over the last decade there has been a dramatic increase in the production of pulpwood logs from plantations. However, the production of hardwood logs from plantations has remained static.

RFPG calls upon the Commonwealth to commission a policy process to:

- review policy instruments available to the Commonwealth to promote the development of plantation timber production, in particular, sawlogs; and
- recommend a policy package including tax measures which will as rapidly as possible phase out native forest logging.

For further information see:

Plantation Policy – Time for Action



Six year old Eucalyptus plantation on the Liverpool Plains, NSW (Photo: Brad Law) . From EMR Project Summaries, Monthly Archives , Sept 2011 Published as part of the journal Ecological Management & Restoration

Encourage the development and implementation of more efficient technologies for milling and manufacture!

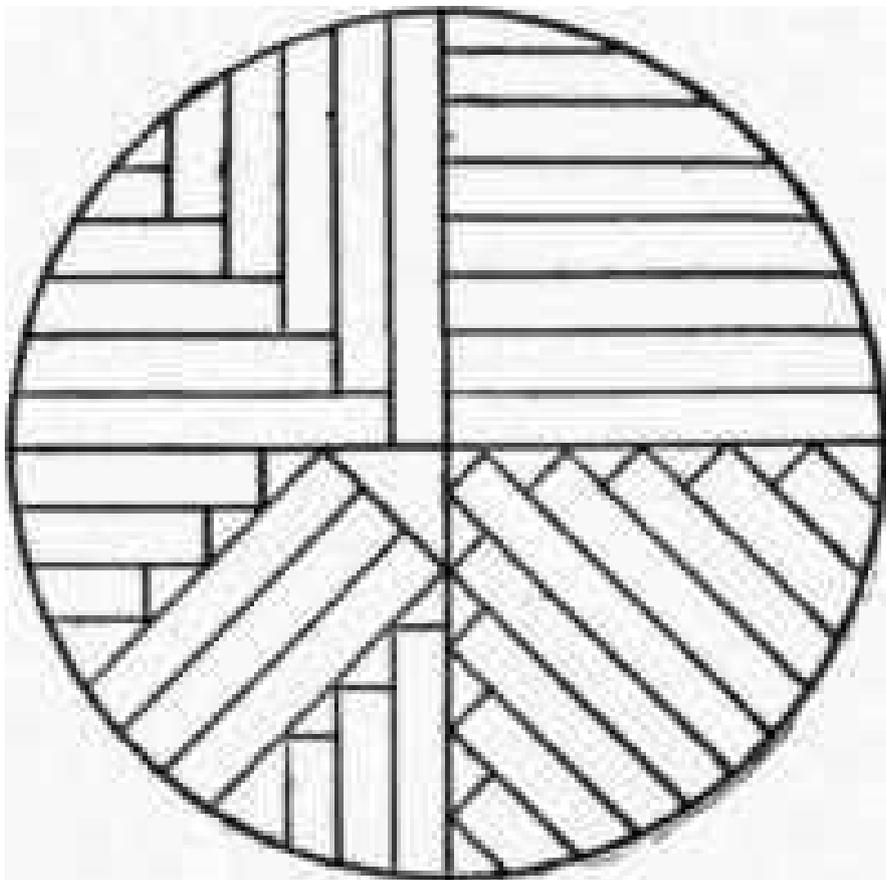
The National Forest Policy Statement of 1992 promised increased investment in research and development towards more efficient technologies and a more ecologically sustainable timber industry. Instead the investment in research and development has gone backwards.

RFPG calls upon the Victorian Government to:

- build an innovation hub around the newly purchased Heyfield Mill directed to undertaking research and development and extension for a more efficient and ecologically sustainable timber industry;
- exercise national leadership in policy development for promoting efficient technologies in the milling and manufacture of wood products.

For further information on the need and scope for such an Innovation Hub and policy leadership see:

[Pathways to Greater Efficiency in Milling and Manufacture](#)



What can I do?

The Rubicon Forest Protection Group is working to stop unsustainable logging of our forests; talking, writing, posting, tweeting, lobbying, petitioning and demonstrating to our councillors, members of parliament and candidates for parliament in support of these objectives. We are working in solidarity with other forest conservation activists across Victoria and Australia and beyond.

We urge members of our community and the people of Melbourne and beyond to come to the Rubicon and see what is being destroyed in their name.

We urge members of our community and the people of Victoria and Australia to engage in the fight to save the Rubicon and other remaining native forests.

Talk, write, tweet, post, lobby and petition your local representatives (and candidates) about the policy items in the above lists.

We urge recreational enthusiasts and their organisations to help protect what remains of the Rubicon and other native forests before the damage is completely irreparable.



The Rubicon Forest Protection Group Inc

“to protect and promote the values of the Rubicon State Forest.”

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