

Purpose

The purpose of the Forest Industry Taskforce is to provide a forum for the major stakeholders to reach common ground on a durable long-term set of recommendations and proposals to government, about future issues facing the industry, job protection, economic activity, protection of our unique flora and fauna and threatened species, such as the Leadbeater's possum.

Outcome

The Taskforce will provide to the Victorian Government, recommendations about how best to ensure that Victoria conserves high value ecological assets, maintains healthy forests and builds and maintains a vibrant world-leading forest, fibre and wood products industry, based on:

- secure fibre and wood supplies
- jobs maintenance and growth
- protection of unique native flora and fauna and threatened species
- new conservation reserves and national parks
- forest management which maintains forest health and supports the full range of economic, social and environmental values and benefits at state, regional and local levels

Structure and process

Reaching common ground amongst a multi-stakeholder group around issues of high complexity is challenging. In recognising that one stakeholder or organisation alone cannot solve the challenges, stakeholders are committed to work together, and have co-designed the process to enable this.

The recommendations presented to the Victorian Government will be reached by consensus, which is a group decision process for seeking and reaching consent that reflects the will of the group, with any objections to that decision resolved as part of the process.

Key points

- This is a stakeholder-led taskforce, supported and financed by the Victorian Government.
- For the first time in Victoria the development of policy recommendations has been delegated to a group of individuals representing major stakeholders.
- Stakeholders with a long history of conflict are working together to develop recommendations by consensus.
- Issues of high complexity, such as those associated with future forest use and management, are challenging to resolve.

Taskforce members

INDEPENDENT CHAIR

Professor Don Henry – University of Melbourne

PLANNING GROUP

Jane Calvert – Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU)

Tim Johnston – Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI)

Amelia Young – The Wilderness Society Victoria (TWS)

CORE GROUP

Jess Abrahams – Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)

Vince Hurley – Australian Sustainable Hardwood (ASH)

Julian Mathers/Peter Williams – Australian Paper (AP)

John McConachy – representing harvest and haulage contractors

Alex Millar/Travis Wacey – Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU)

Sarah Rees – MyEnvironment

Matt Ruchel – Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA)

Scope

The focus will be on future use and management of Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) state forests east of the Hume Highway, and will be informed by consideration of:

- Whole community benefits including the full range of economic, social and environmental values
- Existing plantations and development of new private and/or public plantations
- Wood resource on private property
- State-wide supply chain
- Industry economics and the competitive environment it operates in
- Conservation values in RFA areas, and in existing and new national parks, and other reserves
- Landscape-wide biodiversity
- Fire and climate change impacts

