

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP
Minister for Environment
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Outdoor Recreation



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HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE FUTURE OF OUR FORESTS

Victorians have a landmark opportunity to help design the future of the state's public land estate – which now includes more than 1.8 million hectares of forest previously used for timber harvesting.

To inform the future use and management of Victoria's forest estate the Allan Labor Government has established the Great Outdoors Taskforce to investigate ways to support more Victorians and visitors to explore the great outdoors, protect biodiversity and create new recreation opportunities.

Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos has appointed the Great Outdoors Taskforce – which will be chaired by former Victorian Minister for Environment Lisa Neville.

Members of the Taskforce include:

- Karen Cain, chair of the Eminent Panel for Community Engagement
- Mellissa Wood, chair of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council and member of the Eminent Panel for Community Engagement
- Graham Dear, Board Chair of the Victorian Fisheries Authority
- Terry Robinson, CEO of Destination Gippsland.

The taskforce will also include Traditional Owner representation – their involvement will be flexible to allow for each Traditional Owner group to determine its involvement.

The Taskforce will consult with communities and stakeholders – ensuring all options for future uses and care of the forest are heard and explored. The Taskforce will consider opportunities to protect the environment and support recreational, social and commercial opportunities in their recommendations to Government.

This includes investigating which areas of the estate present opportunities for recreation and tourism such as camping, hunting, hiking, trail-bike riding and four-wheel driving.

The Taskforce will also explore which areas need to be protected to safeguard threatened species, areas that qualify for protection as National Parks and opportunities for Traditional Owner management.

The panel will prioritise areas of state forest where some decisions can be made now and advise on where more engagement is required.

The work will be undertaken over the next 12 months and consultation details will be released in the coming weeks.

For more information visit, deeca.vic.gov.au/futureforests/immediate-protection-areas/future-forests.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos

“The end of native timber harvesting presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to design new ways of caring for our forests while giving Victorians more opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors.”

“This Taskforce will play a critical role listening to Victorians about how best to manage our forests – each member brings specialised knowledge to the panel ensuring thorough consideration of all options during consultation.”

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