

Media Release.

Rubicon Forest Protection Group's comment about the Andrew Government's decision to end native forest logging in Victoria.

The Rubicon Forest Protection Group welcomes the Government's decision to end logging of native forests in Victoria, but for the Rubicon State Forest and the other Central Highlands ash forests of Toolangi and Marysville 2030 is far too long to wait.

Under the Code of Practice for Timber Production, the logging of old-growth ash forests is already illegal in these forests as there is almost none left, so while the newly announced ban on logging of old-growth forests is welcome, it has no impact here.

The 1939 ash regrowth forests that should become the old-growth forests of the future will continue to be logged at current rates until 2024, so by the time the phase-down begins, the only largely intact areas left will be in Yarra Ranges National Park and a few special protection zones. But like most of the Central Highlands ash forests outside the Yarra Ranges National Park, these 1939 ash regrowth forests have already been devastated by fire and over-logging.

"These remaining patches of biodiverse 80-year-old forests that are targeted by VicForests should be left to become old growth forests for the future" said Ken Deacon.

"If they are all logged, the biodiversity of this amazing area will be wrecked and we will have no hope of building a viable forest tourism industry for the future" Mr Deacon said

While around 2,700 hectares of the Rubicon State Forest is to be protected immediately to save threatened Greater Glider populations, most is already in special protection zones. By our calculation only 125 hectares that VicForests had planned to log will now be saved. This means that virtually the entire Snobs Creek Valley, source of water for Victoria's only fish hatchery, as well as the ridge along the Torbreck Range, visible from far and wide, will still be logged.

Mr Andrews is making virtue out of necessity, knowing that the timber is fast running out. We celebrate the announced protection of forest in the Strathbogies, Noojee and Mirboo North, but the much larger area of remaining mature ash forest in the Rubicon has been over-looked and will go.

Ken Deacon
Convenor RFPG
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