



Last chance for Rubicon Forest Analysis and Proposals

Rubicon Forest Protection Group
Presentation to Murrindindi Shire Council
8 June 2016

Who We Are

The RFPG was formed late last year by a group of local people concerned about the scale and intensity of logging in the Rubicon State Forest.

Presenters:

Ken Deacon

Ann Jelinek

Nick Legge

Uncle Roy Patterson

Respect this Land

*“No-one owns Mother Earth.
Mother Earth looks after us and
we look after Mother Earth”*

Uncle Roy Patterson,

Daungurung/Taungurung elder

16 May 2016



Flea Creek coupe, 2014

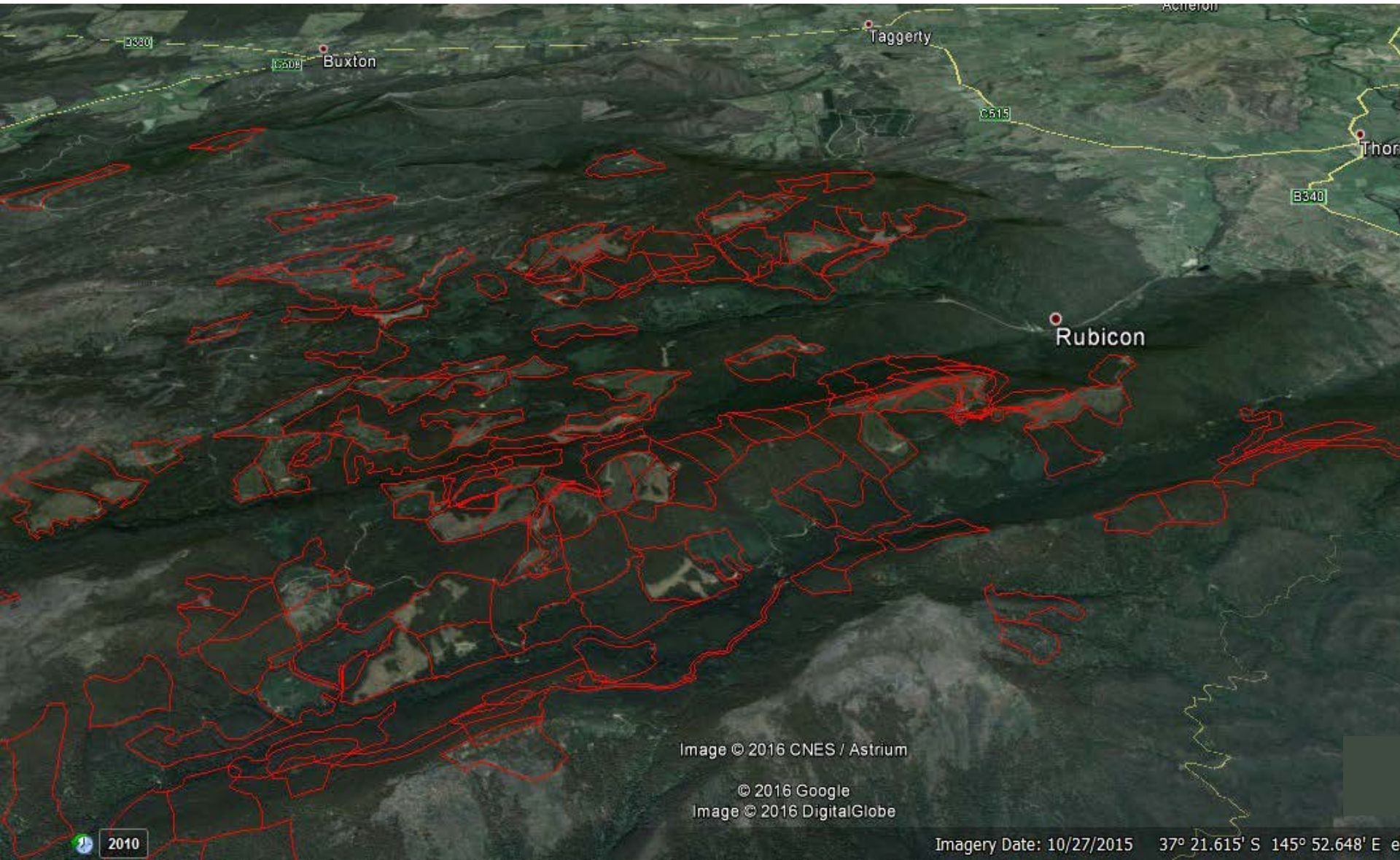




Rubicon State Forest, October 2015

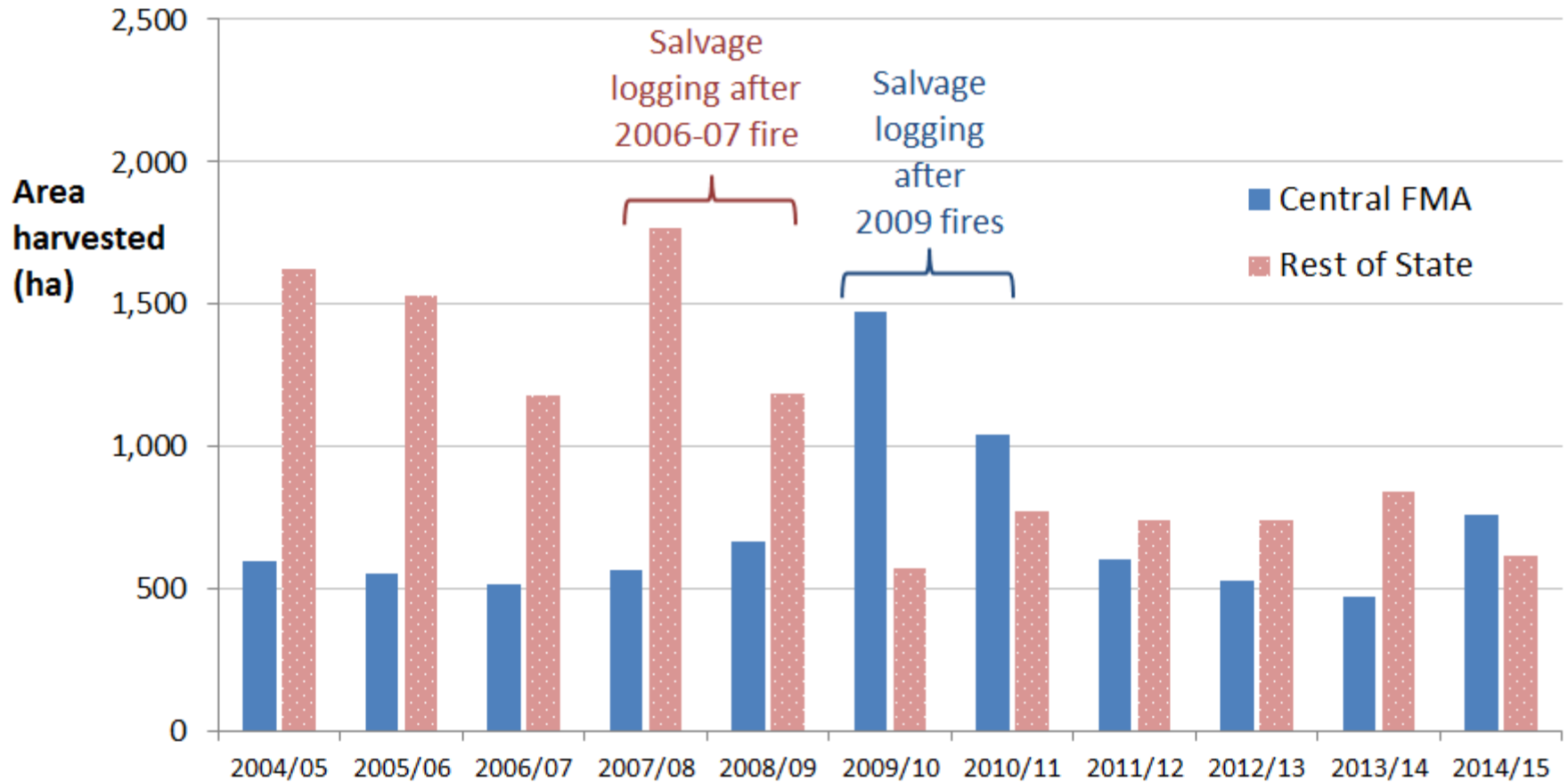


With much more to come: TRP 2013-2016



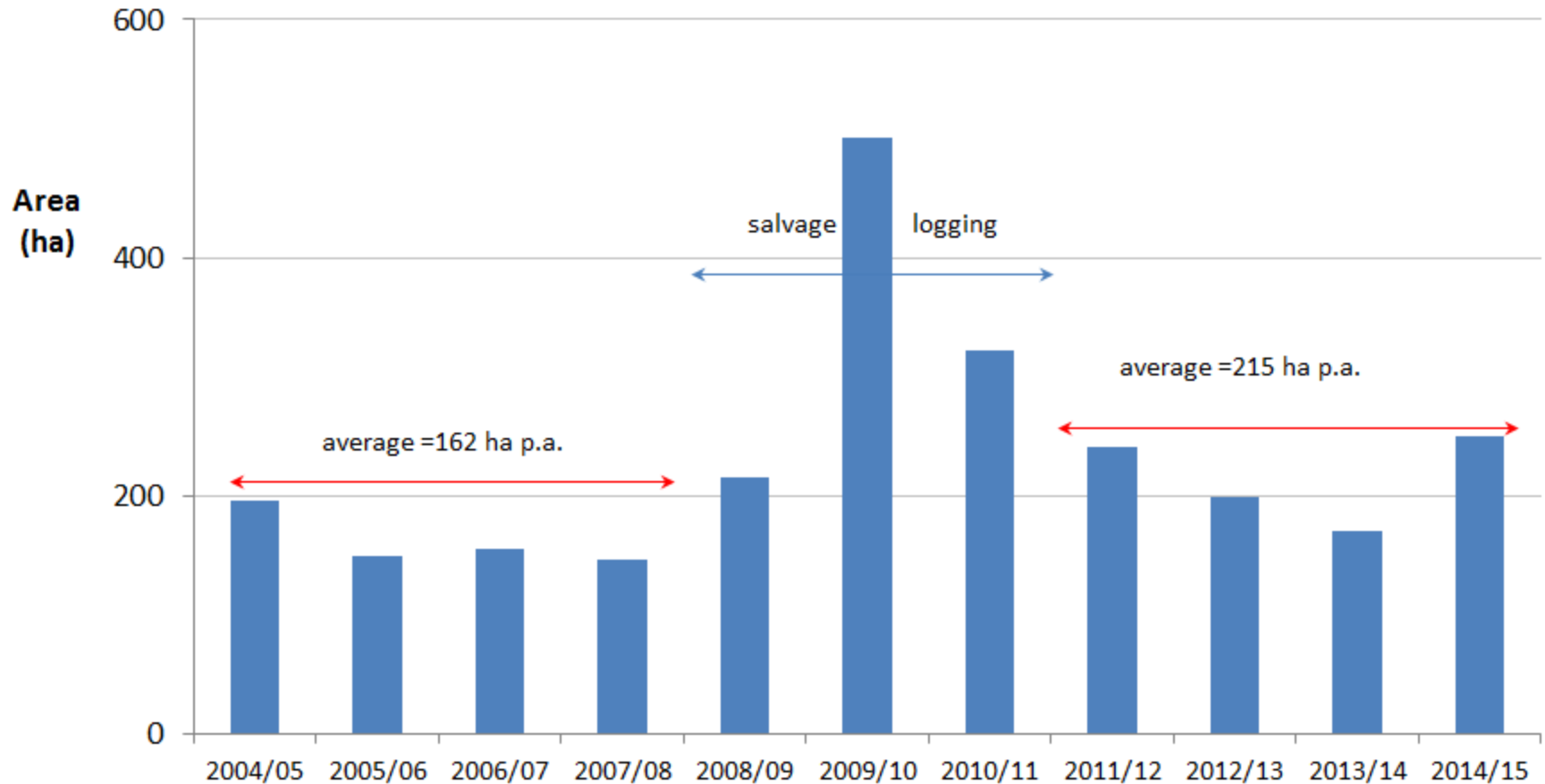


Ash logging: Central FMA and rest of State



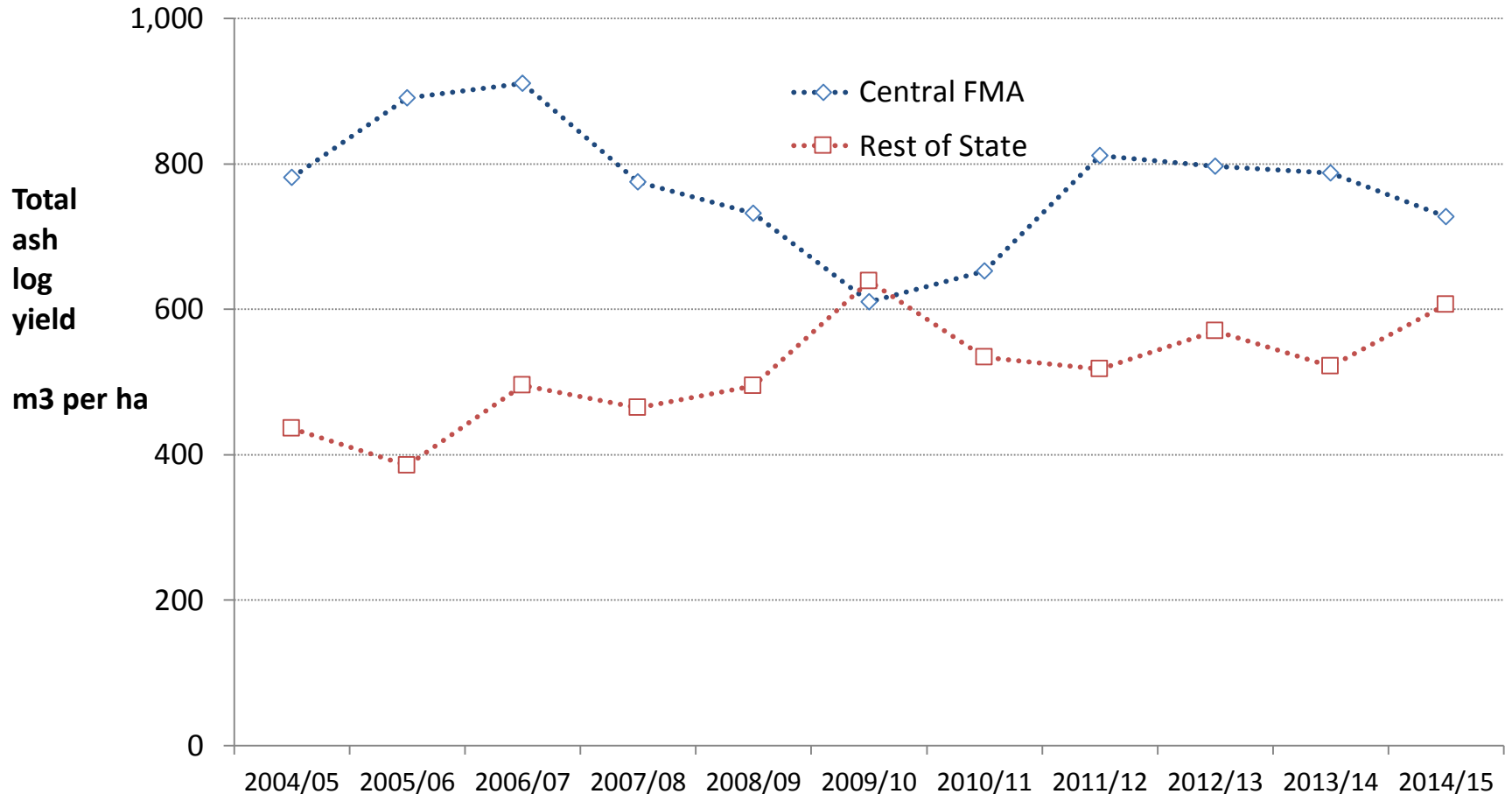
Note the big drop in ash logging in 'Rest of State' after the 2006-07 fire, but no change in Central FMA after 2009 despite 13,500 ha killed

Ash forest logging in Rubicon State Forest



But after the 2009 fire, logging in the Rubicon SF rose . . by a third!

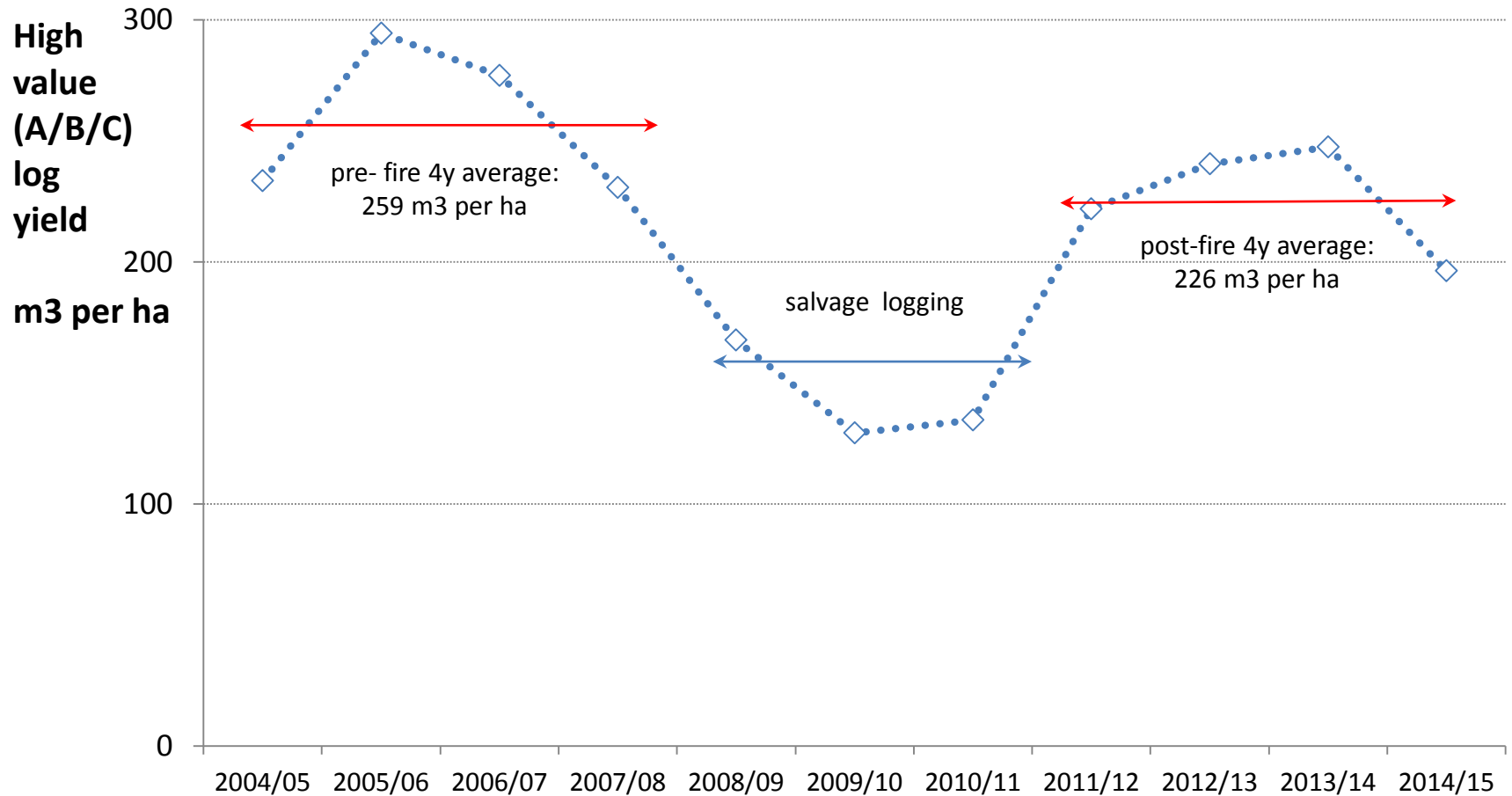
Yield of ash logs across Victoria



Perhaps because the Central FMA is probably very profitable, with the highest ash log yield in the State



Yield of high value ash logs in Rubicon SF



And Rubicon SF is the most profitable of all but since 2009 yields have fallen

But in a few years yield will be irrelevant

Extent of available harvestable ash from
2004 to 2019 in Central FMA
= **20,000 ha** (est. net)

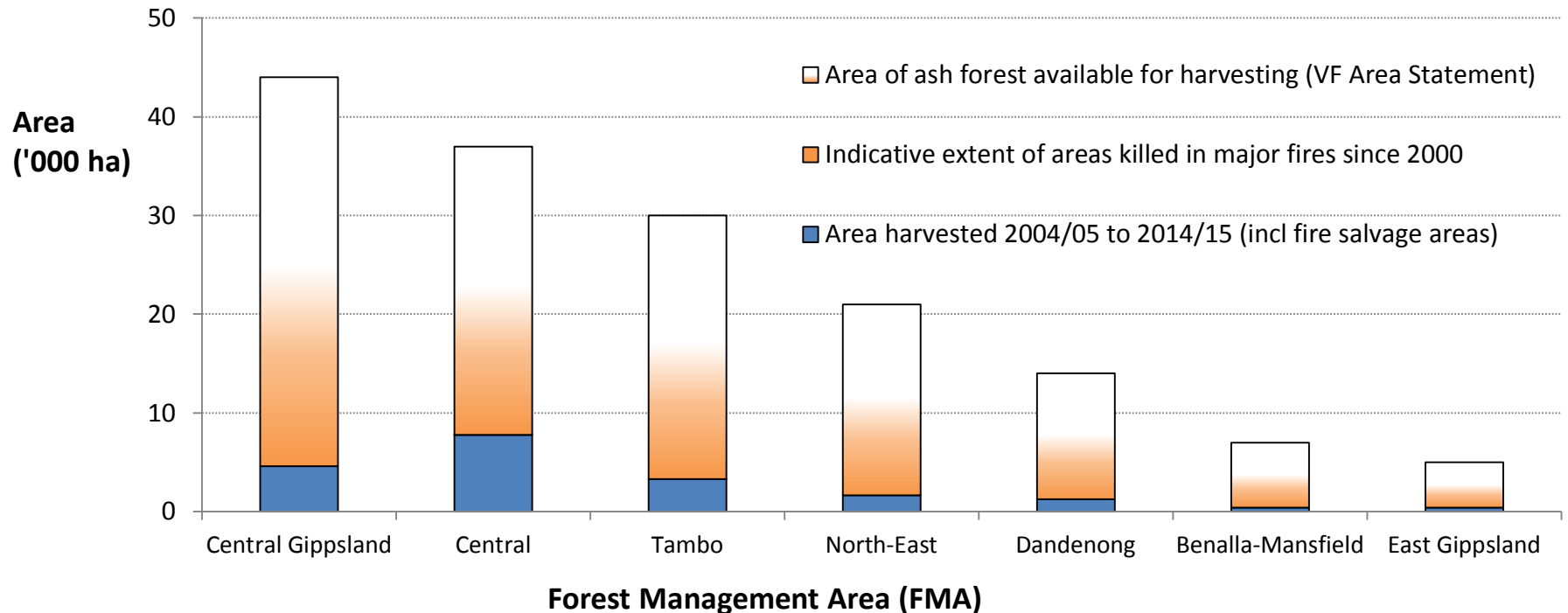
↓
less harvestable stands killed in 2009 fires (-5,400),
estimated net area reserved for Leadbeaters possum (-500) and net area
harvested since 2004 (-8,200), but excl estimated salvage logged areas (+2,300)

↓
Extent of available harvestable ash from 2016 to 2035
= **8,200 ha** (net, before adjustments)

↓
plus harvestable stands coming on stream in next 20 years (est. nil) less a prudent allowance for
otherwise harvestable areas that will be lost to bushfires (say, -4,000) and less an allowance for
adoption of regrowth retention harvesting to protect leadbeater's possum (say, -1,000)

↓
Extent of available harvestable ash from
2016 to 2035 = **3,200 ha** (est. net)

So, how much unlogged and unburnt ash forest now remains statewide?



Of the total area of available ash forest (158,000 ha) at least half has been burnt or logged since VicForests was created. Probably less than half of what remains will be of harvestable age over the next 20 years.



Breaches of the Code

The RFPG has observed many apparent breaches of VicForest's bible, the **2014 Code of Practice for Timber Production**.

Examples include:

- Corded areas not rehabilitated
- Landscape sensitivity areas not identified, or if identified not properly acted upon (e.g Flea Creek, Calvin, Brown Sugar)
- Areas where coupe contiguousness exceeds permitted threshold (e.g. top of Royston Range),
- Failure to protect streams, such as Flea Creek, with appropriate buffer strips
- Significant losses of retained trees in coupes following regeneration burns
- Minimal if any field surveys for flora and fauna for proposed logging roads, log dumps and coupes with reliance on existing database records.

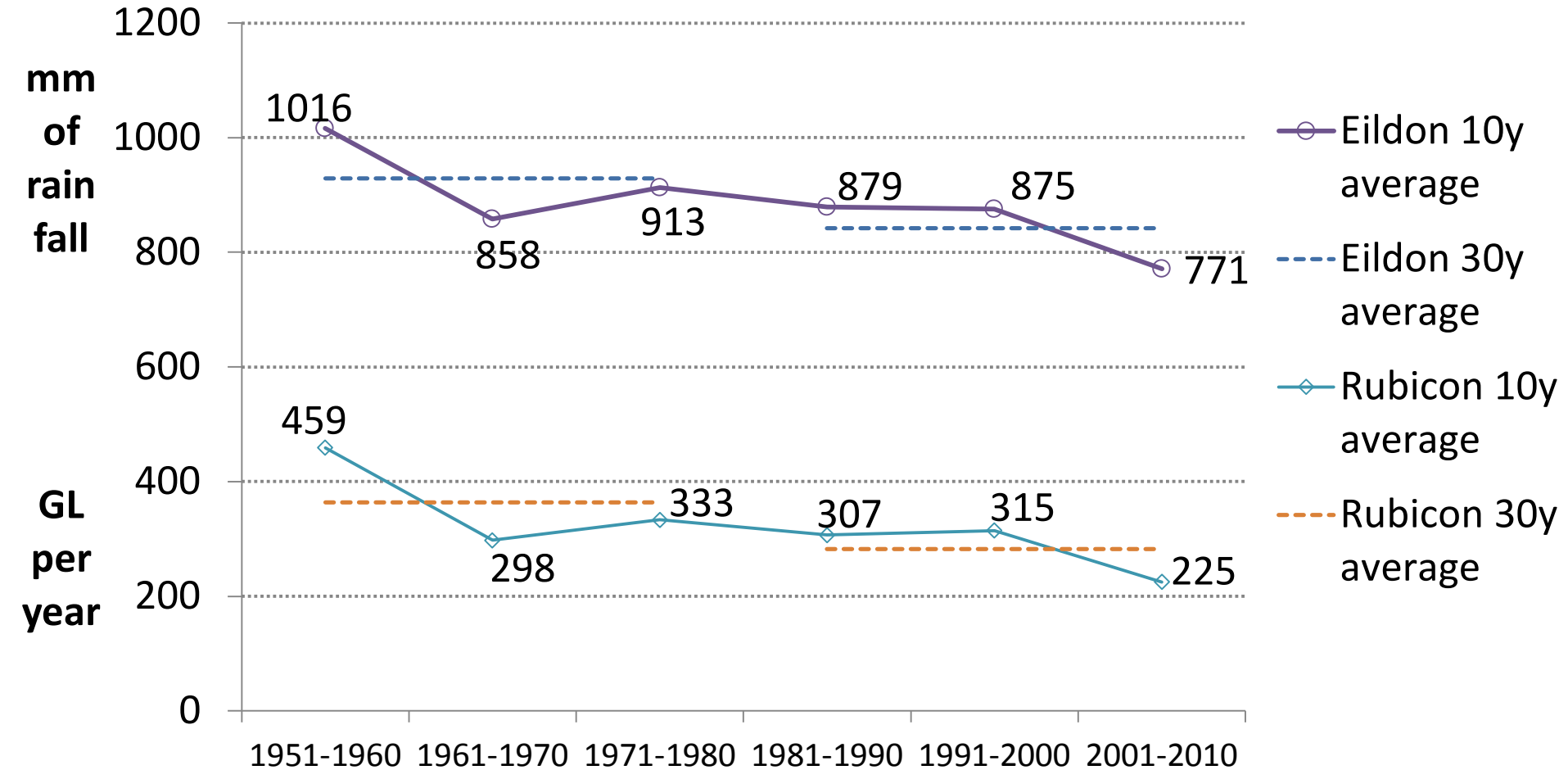


Long term loss of other forest values

The **scale and intensity** of the current logging in the Rubicon SF and the Central FMA - - **on top of the 2009 fires** - - is jeopardising many other forest values and services. These include:

- Fire risk and fire consequences
 - increased fire-proneness of younger forests
 - consequences for forest regeneration when fire occurs in young stands
- Biodiversity
 - Native fauna and flora habitat loss
 - Increased ecological vulnerability of specific ash forest communities
 - Weed invasion (thistles, blackberries) and regeneration failures
 - Fostering pest animals (esp. deer)
- Forest tourism
 - Loss of scenic beauty
 - Loss of active tourism, recreational and educational opportunities
- Water yield issue
 - AGL
 - irrigators

60 year rainfall and streamflow



Rubicon River 30y streamflow is now 22% lower than the previous 30y. Global warming and continued logging suggests this long-term decline will continue.



Tourist development proposals

1. Create an aboriginal cultural heritage trail including Naah Naah Djong (the Cathedral Range) and early forced re-settlement sites for the Daungurung/Taungurung people.
2. Develop self-guided driving tours on the Plateau highlighting historic, ecological and geologically significant sites like the amazing Cerberean Cauldron.
3. 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.
4. 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
5. Improve signposting and access to the Rubicon Historic Area
6. Check if Alexandra Timber Tramway museum can establish a mini display at the Rubicon Power Station
7. Open the haulage line with cog railway from Rubicon Power Station
8. Establish mountain bike trails, incorporating aqueducts and trestle bridges
9. Upgrade Barnewall Plains Rd to 2WD standard to improve access to Mt Torbreck

The Great Cerberean Caldera

