

SOS - Save Our Snobs

by Ian Blyth

A LOCAL environmental action group has called for immediate action to control logging in the Snobs creek catchment.

The Rubicon Forest Protection Group (RFPG) set up a listening post outside the Snobs Creek Fish Hatchery last week to highlight the group's concerns over logging in the area.

Convenor of the RFPG Ken Deacon said that the hatchery was a unique facility that relied on a high water quality from Snobs Creek and this was being compromised by logging in the catchment.

"We estimate that the direct result of logging is a loss of 30 per cent flow in Snobs Creek. This along with a rapid decline in water quality is posing a threat to not only the hatchery but to recreational tourism – an industry that employs some 30,000 people in associated businesses across Victoria," Mr Deacon said.

He added that it was the group's concern over VicForests' plans for the Snobs Creek gully that led the group to take action on the first of two public open days at the hatchery.

We spoke with more than 200 people with the majority expressing interest in our cause," Mr Deacon said.

"Our actions last week highlighted our concerns over the impact of logging on water quality along with our support of the viability of the hatchery."

Logging in the Rubicon State Forest has ramped up since the 2009 fires. The RFPG has frequently expressed concerns over the provisions in the 1998 Central Highlands Regional Forest Agreement.

Mr Deacon said that these include the failure to ensure ecologically sustainable forest management and to achieving a balance between the needs of the timber industry and those of other forest users.

"The specification of an unsustainable

minimum volume of wood production in the RFA contributed to over-logging from the outset," Mr Deacon added.

Immediately after the 2018 State Election the RFPG wrote to Jaclyn Symes, Minister for Regional Development, Agriculture and Resources with what Mr Deacon described as disappointing results.

"We felt like we were fobbed off. We are still waiting feedback from the Minister," Mr Deacon said.

The *Alexandra Standard* contacted Ms Symes' office for comment. No response was received at the time of going to press.