

GIPPSLAND FOREST DIALOGUE

Forestech 'What's Next' Co-Chairs Report



Engage • Explore • Change



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The Gippsland Forest Dialogue is conducted across the Traditional Lands of the Gunaikurnai, Bunurong, Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung, Taungurung peoples, and into the lands of the First Nations of far East Gippsland, the Moogji, Bidhawal/Bidwell/Bidwall and Monero peoples. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. We acknowledge Traditional Owners on whose land we tread as the original custodians of Country, their enduring rights, and that many of the issues we will discuss are the product of settlement. We open the door to hear and respond, to listen and learn, to understand and acknowledge their individual and collective voice. We aspire to strengthen partnerships and acknowledge that increasing agency for traditional owners comes through ongoing conversations and working together.

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FOCUS



Our much loved Gippsland forests are in a stage of significant change.

The revised date of January 2024 for the end of timber harvesting has raised urgent questions about what the future of Gippsland's forests will be: how they will be managed, who will manage them, and how their health can be assured in an uncertain future. In this context, the Gippsland Forest Dialogue decided to run a specific event to allow the time and space to discuss and contemplate 'what's next' for Gippsland's forests beyond 2024. The Dialogue offered an opportunity for the Gippsland and the wider community to come together and openly and safely discuss their forests and their future.

The dialogue was all about developing a vision for the future as, in the words of Ngarra Murray, Co-Chair of the Peoples' Assembly, we need 'a healed and healthy Country for all of us' (First People's Assembly of Victoria, 2023).

This was our starting point.

ABOUT THE GIPPSLAND FOREST DIALOGUE

The Gippsland Forest Dialogue process is not new. For generations, the Gunaikurnai have migrated to the high mountain peaks in the ACT and Snowy Mountains of NSW from November to February alongside other clan groups from around the area to collect and feast on Bogong moths. This also provided a deeper cultural purpose, it allowed for 'intertribal meetings, initiation rites and corroborees, marriages, trade facilitation, and fostered mutual understanding and friendship' (Warrant et al., 2016).

The mountain was a neutral meeting ground, a place for the exchange of knowledge and materials, a place to dialogue to connect. Afterwards, each group would return from the mountains, carrying the new knowledge they had gained, and incorporate it into their everyday lives.

The Gippsland Forest Dialogue (GFD) hopes to offer a similar neutral meeting ground. A platform through which people from diverse backgrounds come together to connect, exchange knowledge and perspectives in dialogue. GFD was launched in early 2022 with the aim of sharing knowledge, building understanding and creating mutual respect among stakeholders around the opportunities, challenges and knowledge gaps related to the different approaches to the management of forests in Gippsland.

The GFD creates a space for diverse stakeholders to come together to talk about how best to look after the region's forests, for people and planet, and to explore, find areas of common ground, and identify collaborative actions that could bring about these positive changes. The emphasis is always on creating a safe environment to discuss issues and opportunities, and a diversity of comments are welcomed.

Through building trust, relationships and the exchange of ideas, GFD hopes to nurture the seeds of the future.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This Co-Chairs report synthesises the process, discussion points and key themes arising from the GFD 'What's Next' Dialogue. The content of the report was compiled from a combination of written notes maintained by the Co-Chairs and appointed rapporteurs throughout the dialogue process.

Over the Dialogue, the content which was generated during breakout sessions was reported back to the group for broader group discussion. Furthermore, Co-Chair and rapporteur written notes captured dialogue discussions in a variety of forms, including issues touched on and talked about in whole of group discussions, as well as isolated comments, and formal and informal interchanges between two or more participants. Thus, although Co-Chairs have ensured to only report on content that was generated in some form during the Dialogue (as reflected in Co-Chair notes from discussions), there is likely to be information captured in this report that some participants may not have witnessed firsthand, or otherwise have had the opportunity to comment on.

In light of this, the content of this report should not be taken as points of collective agreement by all Dialogue participants but rather interpreted as a synthesis of the diversity of discussions held in various forms during the process. It is the hope of the Co-Chairs that this report serves to document the various, often differing, comments and opinions voiced by participants, which can be used as a reference point to facilitate more in-depth discussion of the issues raised, address conflicts, and ultimately (hopefully) build trust and agreement, through ensuing dialogues.



Group discussions during Saturday

SECTION 1: FORESTECH 'WHAT'S NEXT' DIALOGUE SUMMARY



Dialogue context

As part of the scoping process, the GFD established an Advisory Task Group who drafted a background paper as a starting point for discussion. This paper aimed to provide dialogue participants with a common understanding of the purpose of the What's Next Dialogue, including an overview of the acute changes facing the Gippsland forests and prompting questions around five main topics of interest likely to be most pertinent to shaping the future of the forests. The five identified topics were: Healthy forests, restoring forests and forest management; First Nations and community; Conservation; Fire management; and Plantations and future supply of forest products.

The scoping paper provided participants with background information and prompting questions to help guide discussions during the dialogue.

The 'What's Next' Dialogue was held over three days. It comprised a field dialogue (day one), what's next dialogue, including a series of plenary and breakout sessions (day two), and a presentation on First Nations fire management, and a closing plenary session (the morning on day three). A full [event overview](#) is provided in the Appendix.

The 'What's Next' Dialogue sessions comprised a series of breakout group discussions (a useful tool for covering a lot of ground in a short period) and to a lesser extent plenary discussions. These sessions were used to brainstorm challenges, and then opportunities, in the way we interact with forests under each thematic area. Outputs were reported back to the group, prioritised and subject to further exploration of knowledge gaps and barriers to change.

Aims and objectives

The aims of the GFD 'What's Next' dialogue were to:

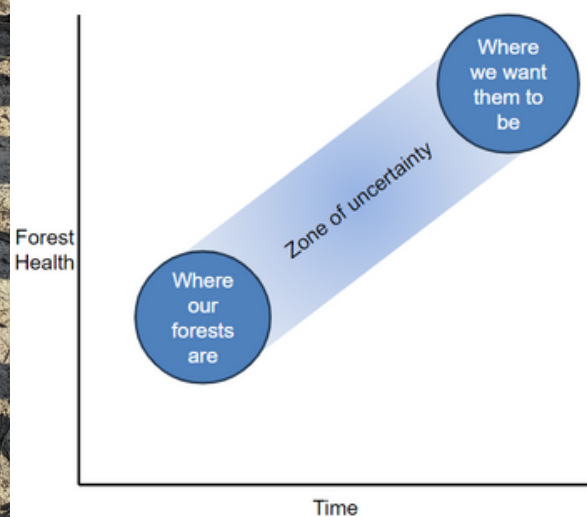
- Collectively identify opportunities, fracture lines, and knowledge gaps across the five key themes.
- Canvas options for forest management in Gippsland to support the health and resilience of forests and forest-dependent communities beyond 2024.
- Offer an opportunity for the Gippsland and the broader interested community to come together and openly and safely discuss their forests and their future.
- Foster a welcoming environment among diverse stakeholders to learn from one another, trust each other, and synthesise current knowledge

Participant Aspirations

On day one, participants were asked what they hoped to get out of the Dialogue.

Responses to this opening question could be condensed as follows:

- Facilitating community Engagement and overcoming Bureaucratic Challenges. Many participants wanted to grapple with the practicalities of how a community group like GFD can overcome bureaucratic obstacles, help shift decision-making processes from urban centres to regional communities, and foster a more inclusive and community-driven approach to forest management.
- Aligning with Natural Systems and Reigniting Passion. Many participants wanted to encourage the wider community to engage meaningfully with natural systems and rekindle passion for and commitment to the common goal of forest health.
- Learning from Mistakes. Acknowledging and learning from past mistakes in forest management to facilitate the healing of people and the environment, and contribute to the collective knowledge of the wider community was another recurring theme.



Participants drawing a timeline of where we are and where we want to be (detailed version on right)

Overarching Co-Chair synthesis

The Co-Chairs convened before, during, and after the Dialogue. During the event, Co-Chairs and note-takers maintained written records of discussions and key themes arising. The intention was for the Co-Chairs to prepare and report to the group a synthesis between each session to maintain continuity between the three days.

Major takeaways included:

- The Dialogue revealed opportunities for forests, and opportunities for the GFD
- Forest health and resilience must be the primary aim of forest stewardship - including effectively accounting for the value of ecosystem services, beyond traditional economic values like timber
- A general, palpable frustration with top-down, bureaucratic, centralised, siloed management approaches which lacked transparency and accountability was evident, coupled with enthusiasm around opportunities to find new, more integrated, local and connected ways of working. This was repeatedly expressed by participants as getting decisions on Country and into the community.
- Desire to explore whole-of-landscape approaches to tackle big issues (e.g. climate change, fire management, habitat connectivity, etc.).
- The desire to explore new and innovative policy, regulatory frameworks, and alternative models of funding that can support the protection and restoration of forest health.
- The importance of ensuring that additional missing voices and stakeholders are represented in future discussions and dialogues. In particular, there was a consensus on the importance of listening to and involving First Nations people in decisions and dialogues that concern the future of the forests.
- The importance of ensuring that there is a balance in leadership from different stakeholders in the GFD to build trust in the initiative's neutrality.
- There is still work to be done to build understanding about the what and why of GFD - lack of understanding is currently still a limitation to broader participation. A comment was made that before attending the Dialogue the GFD appeared like a secret society
- We have only scraped the surface of what we need to know - science can take us some way and we need to work on ways to heal knowledge with First Nations, but this cannot help us solve values differences. In many instances lack of knowledge is not the issue, resolving different values is
- Change is happening exponentially, but our institutions, funding and resourcing structures are not set up to respond and adapt effectively - we need vastly enhanced financial and resourcing investment, including growing skills and capacity
- Major legislative reform is needed - that is long term and holistic
- The full spectrum of management is likely to be needed - from passive in some areas, to fully active management in others

- Acknowledging and responding to climate change impacts is a top priority for our forests, including the need for fire management all year round
- The broader community are increasingly disconnected from forests

Supporting the future health of the Gippsland's forest will involve working together to identify bridges and points of communication between stakeholders, managers and communities; advocating for change on multiple fronts; and, providing examples of positive, scalable actions to successfully live with and limit negative impacts on our forests, to ensure that they remain functional and provide for future generations. Each person involved has a responsibility as a node for promoting this.

Opportunities for change

During the Dialogue sessions held on day two, participants engaged in a series of breakout sessions to explore the challenges around the first 4 themes outlined in the Scoping paper under the themes associated with Gippsland forests: Forest Health, Fire Management, First Nations and Active Management. This was an exploratory exercise intended to foster creative thinking among participants. Participants recorded their discussions and then reported back to the wider group. Day 3 of the dialogue was breakout groups exploring opportunities in the dominant themes emerging from the Dialogue discussions on Forest Health and Conservation; Fire; Capability and Funding; Policy and Legislation. See the exploration of key themes for detail.

Strategies for action

The broader role of the GFD, its long-term directions and key next steps for action were discussed during a plenary meeting on day three of the 'What's Next' Dialogue.

Future directions

Overall, broader discussions around the future directions for the Gippsland Forest Dialogue fell into four main categories - defining who GFD is, creating future working groups, communication, networking and knowledge sharing and future dialogues on fracture lines and important themes.

Definition of who we are

The Dialogue group discussed the importance of GFD forming a stronger definition of who we are, not victims of top-down decisions about the environment, but as taking leadership during a time of change.

Future working groups

During the Dialogue, four potential working groups were proposed to emerge from the dialogue. Whilst these working groups may emerge, they would not represent the Dialogue. The Dialogue is the platform where deep and wide discussion takes place. Whilst some members may potentially take ideas from this dialogue forward because it has been shown to have a strong political and community position, this does not make these groups representative of the Gippsland Dialogues.

Four potential working groups were proposed to emerge from the dialogue;

1. A healthy forest working group that seeks to further engage with and explore ideas as to how we protect and restore the health of our forests.
2. A policy working group that will continue to workshop potential ideas as to how we can create policy which is more effective in its capacity to protect and restore forest health
3. An accountability group that develops a framework for accountability and provides the necessary regulatory oversight to help develop community trust during the transition
4. A First Nations working group that aims to engage a diverse range of people, including those who are connected to GLaWAC but importantly, also the elders and broader community.

Communication, networking and knowledge sharing

Participants emphasised the importance of educating, changing and communicating different views and perspectives on forests through the GFD process, with a focus on engaging under-represented people, communities and stakeholders in future discussions and dialogues. This focus will aid the GFD in addressing current gaps in knowledge, participation and understanding, as well as foster networking and connections that may enable pilots through partnerships with different groups and communities.

Future dialogues on fracture lines and important themes

While multiple important themes and associated fracture lines appeared over the course of the Dialogue, there was not sufficient time to discuss all these in detail and allow participants to hear all the different perspectives on these. The idea of a future dialogue which picked up and focused on some of these themes was highlighted as a beneficial step forward, rather than jumping into a completely new topic and losing the opportunity to tease out and explore concerns that were raised in a neutral environment.

Next steps

Key priority next steps for the GFD were identified as:

- Advisory Group meeting on 20th September 2023.
- Co-Chairs report drafted ready for circulation and feedback in early October.
- Prioritisation of communications, engagement and advocacy. Enhance visibility of GFD from the outside to enable better participation. Dialogue participants as partners helping to disperse the motives and ideals of the GFD. Ensure that communications on GFD represent participants who are taking leadership.
- Work to ensure balanced representation of different stakeholders in leadership positions in the GFD
- GFD members to network and pass on the message so that the movement can expand, facilitate understanding and participation from missing stakeholder groups, and better advocate for Gippsland's forests.
- Next dialogue: Yarram (10-12 November 2023).



Traditional knowledge sharing at Lake Tyres Aboriginal Trust

SECTION 2: EXPLORATION OF KEY THEMES



This section of the Co-Chairs report comprises an exploration of key themes that arose leading up to and during the 'What's Next' Dialogue. It is based on a synthesis of the various interactions that took place during the dialogue (including whole and breakout group discussions, as well as informal comments and remarks by participants across the three days), rather than the output of in-depth group discussions on any one issue. Opportunities for detailed discussions into key issues were restricted by time constraints and the broad-reaching suite of topics that were the focus of this initial dialogue (see Dialogue process and limitations). The content in this section therefore does not encapsulate a comprehensive summary of the views and opinions of all participants; there may be additional themes, fracture lines and opinions which are not reflected. Nonetheless, the topics covered will provide useful considerations for feeding into future dialogues (see Next steps), and serve as useful building blocks from which to work towards a more comprehensive understanding of the varying perspectives pertaining to Gippsland forests. Key sections include: Exploration of themes, Cross-cutting themes, and Fracture lines.

Exploration of themes

Forest Health

Key Insights

Over the weekend, there was an overwhelming acknowledgement that the health of the Gippsland forests was at the heart of everyone's concern. There was general agreement that major bushfire events, the reduction of appropriate active management practices, and clear-felling in some areas have led to the current degraded state of the forests. Participants agreed that the health of our forests needs to be a priority as we move forward, and this was best highlighted by a moment on the field trip where participants began to draw a 'mudmap' in the sand on where forest health currently is, and where we would like it to get to. There was a general reflection that many agreed forest health needs to improve, but we are moving through a time of uncertainty in terms of how that will be done. This was agreed to entail a perspective shift; from one of forest management to forest stewardship, which represents a more holistic and long-term approach to caring for forests.

While questions were raised as to how we define forest health, many discussions emphasised the presence of older trees for habitat, the capacity to look a few hundred yards through the forests, natural forest cycles, reproductive capacity and the ability to recover after disturbances as key indicators. Building resilience in forests to withstand catastrophic events was identified by participants to be a primary objective of forest health stewardship. Participants noted, however, that as each forest is different and dynamic, strategies to achieve forest health will differ accordingly.

Further, a recurring observation was that when working to cultivate forest health, we need to reconsider and align our actions with a longer timescale. 500 years was identified by some participants as a baseline for forest health. Participants recognised the link between long-term forest management and the need for long-term leadership if we are to provide healthy forests for the generations to come. Another key insight was that part of a healthy forest is a healthy knowledge base to support it. Participants agreed that previous forest management was undertaken according to a knowledge hierarchy which sidelined the wisdom and insight of First Nations knowledge, an imbalance which would need addressing moving forward.

Challenges and Concerns

There was an overwhelming concern that the current bureaucratic, city-centric and risk-averse management is inappropriate and causing the rapid degradation of forest health. Participants identified that despite established scientific frameworks existing for managing forest health, their adoption depends on political decision-making and that the political willpower needed to ensure appropriate change and necessary funding for restoration and conservation projects is absent. One notable concern raised was the tension between the government's capacity to provide and maintain a sustainable long-term vision for the forests and the current four-year election cycles. Participants stressed the need for strategies to ensure that long-term planning takes precedence over short-term political considerations.

In addition, participants raised concerns about the effectiveness of legislation and the potential abuse of legislative loopholes. This was demonstrated in two ways. The Policy and Legislation subgroup on the Sunday morning suggested that "major legislation reform is needed for forest governance, for example, the replacement of the Forests Act with a Healthy Forests Act". In a similar vein, other participants expressed concern that current legislation may be abused to support controversial activities, such as the removal of timber during fire management. Whilst outside of the Gippsland area, participants raised concern that the recent extraction of logs from the Wombat state forest and the Dandenongs which ceased after media attention. They were concerned that this extraction was illegally happening under the guise of fire management and storm cleanup. A lack of trust between sectors and viewpoints was still prominent in the discussion, which also raised the challenge of competing and sometimes contradictory scientific research.

Participants recognised that certain types of knowledge have historically been given preferential treatment or importance over others. Specifically, historically scientific forestry knowledge has generally been privileged over traditional, local, and practical knowledge held by communities.

There was a concern raised that when we consider a forest, people often focus solely on trees, overlooking other key elements of the system including soil microbiome and fauna.

A tension arose in the dialogue regarding the degradation of forests from weed management and fire under a “lock it up and leave it” model. Concern was expressed that despite environmental groups often being identified as strong supporters of this approach, this is not representative. Rather, it was raised that often environmentalists turn to this approach as it is perceived to be the only current model which provides appropriate protection from external pressures. This perception emphasises the need for a more nuanced understanding of active management to maintain health and ecological function that goes beyond previous binaries of extraction or hands off management. Time was insufficient to allow for detailed debate on this topic, but it was acknowledged as a point of difference requiring further attention.

Opportunities

Participants' acknowledgement of the necessity of moving towards long-term perspectives and sustainability over short-term gains highlighted the need to shift away from immediate profit-driven approaches. This was underpinned by the opportunity to change the way we approach forest management from an anthropocentric (human-centred) towards a more ecosystem-centric view. Participants acknowledged that the inclusion of First Nations, local communities and those with forest knowledge in both decision making and management solutions is key to ensure these long-term sustainable solutions.

Further, participants identified that the transition away from commercial timber production provided an opportunity to move beyond prescriptive policy making towards regional, contextual ecological policies. This would allow for the development of flexible and adaptive responses to forest health. Some participants suggested that while the majority of management responsibility should lie with the community, there was still a need for regulatory oversight. Participants highlighted truth-telling and transparency as paramount to rebuild trust and boost the effectiveness of the current transition in management with community confidence. Adopting a regulatory framework that people believe works, engaging in truth-telling regarding past management mistakes and making information about forest health publicly available were identified as opportunities to build this trust.

Participants highlighted the importance of education and awareness programs aimed at helping the community understand and appreciate the importance of forests. Forest education programs were identified as a way to support modern young people, particularly in the current environment where, for example Parks Victoria is investing millions into their Victoria's Great Outdoors Programs. One suggestion was a forest service, similar to army service, as a way to get people on the ground actively managing the forests. Further, participants discussed that Australia's large landmass could give it a key role in the bioeconomy as part of a transition to clean energy. Various innovative approaches were suggested, including microchipping trees for monitoring and exploring techniques to maximise carbon sequestration.

First Nations

Key Insights

Over the Dialogue, there was a widespread acknowledgement of the key role First Nations people, their knowledge and wisdom, would play in the future stewardship of the forests. This discussion ran in parallel to the acknowledgement that previous colonial approaches to forest management had overlooked this vital knowledge base, resulting in the degradation of the forests. It was agreed that First Nations people need to be involved in decision making to ensure their voice is properly heard and incorporated. To do so, participants acknowledged that Traditional Custodians should have a say as to what constitutes a healthy Country, based upon what is important to them and how they feel about it, in order to overcome previous knowledge hierarchies which platformed western scientific understandings of land. Incorporating these voices was identified as key to ensuring a healthy forest for the future as First Nations practices emphasise care for Country at their heart. For instance, petrol or diesel fuel is never used during burning due to its impact on soil biodiversity and aluminium foil was utilised to protect key cultural sites, such as trees, during burns. Being on Country was identified as a form of access that allows Traditional Custodians to engage with the land, utilise its resources, and provide for future generations while respecting cultural values.

Over the course of the Dialogue, the Indigenous knowledge holder present provided the dialogue with a rich and deep cultural knowledge from years of caring for Country. This was identified by participants as invaluable perspective and framework for how we approach forests.

Challenges and Concerns

Over the weekend, there was an acknowledgement of the need to move away from placing excessive pressure on Traditional Custodians to fix the impacts of 200 years of colonial mismanagement. Participants recognised that a more collaborative approach is needed. Participants expressed concerns about the underfunding of Traditional Custodians and the need for adequate financial support to enable effective participation in forest management. There was concern that elders were not properly paid for sharing their knowledge.

There was also a general concern that First Nations communities had not been properly engaged in regards to forest management. Whilst First Nations hold a depth of knowledge and wisdom, they have not been provided access to opportunities to share their stories and knowledge. The importance of supporting First Nations people in knowledge healing was identified. There was also concern raised about how non-First Nations people speak about and articulate how First Nations people manage land - in other words, non-First Nations people often express how they think First Nations people managed forests, rather than just directly seeking their view. This has resulted in a general lack of understanding about the challenges faced by Indigenous communities in forest management. For instance, concerns were raised about the lack of proper recording and protection of

cultural sites. First Nations people also haven't previously been offered the opportunity to engage and learn through processes like the GFD. Involving them in these processes is central if they are to meaningfully contribute to future decision making.

Local and outsider racism was mentioned as a barrier to engagement and collaboration. There was concern raised that individuals working for organisations may face challenges in speaking up about cultural and environmental concerns. Overcoming these challenges was identified to foster inclusivity.

Opportunities

Over the course of the Dialogue, there was a broad recognition of the need to improve and broaden communication and engagement with First Nations in regards to forest stewardship. This was key to ensuring First Nations were involved in decision-making in regards to forests as well as a way to create an employment stream for communities which involves being on Country. This was discussed in relation to GFD as well as more broadly addressing the current gaps within forest management. Participants agreed that addressing these gaps would involve an acknowledgement of the depth of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom that has not previously occurred. Further, participants identified the need to ensure that First Nations communities were properly recognised and resourced to support Indigenous land management practices.

To do so requires learning about the best practices for engagement with Indigenous communities. This includes recognising the role of organisations like GLAWAC, as well as consultation with elders and the broader community. This engagement also underpins the opportunity to build meaningful partnerships based on values and respect between Indigenous communities and government agencies or other stakeholders. GFD acknowledged the importance of continuing this engagement and hopes for it to expand in future, allowing more direct engagement.

Fire Management

Key Insights

Over the course of the dialogue, there was a general view that the health of Country is deteriorating due to lack of burning. This has led to a significant shift in our forests that has impacted our capacity to fight fires. Our forests now carry a significantly larger fuel load that makes old fire management practices impossible. While current views regarding best practice fire management varied, participants agreed that we needed to see a significant change in both when and how these burns are conducted. In particular, there were lengthy discussions about the need to empower local communities and First Nations people with knowledge of the forests in their areas to be more involved in active management. Participants suggested that we need to have an appropriate fire management approach that protects cultural sites from impact from burning and heavy machinery.

The need to clarify, and perhaps broaden and redefine, what is regarded as an 'asset' in fire management (e.g. are ecological values included in our definition of assets?) was identified. As one participant exclaimed, 'We can't rebuild the Macalister Valley'. Participants agreed that this would impact fire management strategies and policy. As an extension of this, participants identified that many people currently employed in forest management do not have an in-depth understanding of forests, leading to management practices that negatively impact biological diversity.

Challenges and Concerns

The forests in Central and East Gippsland have endured severe damage from repeated high-intensity fires, leading to significant changes in forest structure characterised by an overstocking of young trees and shrubs. While there is a recognised need for controlled burns in certain areas, the narrowing window due to climate change and the looming 2023-24 El Niño event are raising concerns about the limited timeframe available for fire management actions. This is compounded by increasingly restrictive government policies and regulations. Decisions related to the frequency, intensity, and target areas for controlled burns involve complex trade-offs between reducing fire risk, preserving biodiversity, and safeguarding communities. The need for fire management to be more adaptive was acknowledged, considering the evolving landscape and climate conditions. Fuel management remains a critical topic requiring further discussion and exploration by the GFD.

Political influence was identified as a potential obstacle to effective fire management, with concerns that decisions regarding burn priorities and approaches may be swayed by political considerations rather than ecological or community needs. Local communities often express feelings of being unheard due to centralised bureaucratic management originating in urban centres. There was unease among some participants about the scale and intensity of fire management practices employed by government agencies like DEECA. Some participants also expressed concern that nature is often sacrificed to reduce human risk, exemplified by the removal of hollow-bearing trees due to perceived hazards. This practice is viewed as a significant threat to biological diversity and a potential fracture line in future fire management operations. Accountability and decision-making responsibility emerged as central questions. Participants raised concerns about who bears responsibility for decisions and their outcomes, especially when decisions are not made or prove ineffective. The complexity of decentralising fire management and the importance of situational awareness in risk management were discussed, highlighting the need to reconsider governance structures.

Participants recognised the need to find appropriate work that accommodates the specialised skills and past significant contributions of timber industry workers. However, some participants raised apprehensions about transitioning timber industry workers into fire management, particularly concerning the potential misuse of forest access for exploitation purposes under the guise of fire management. Some participants emphasised the necessity for proper regulation to address this concern. The establishment of an

environmental commission, currently in development, is seen as a potential step toward bipartisan collaboration.

Opportunities

One promising possibility identified for improving fire management involves shifting towards decentralised leadership. This approach entails granting more decision-making power to local communities, particularly those residing in the affected areas. By doing so, it aims to ensure that those with an intimate understanding of the land, including Indigenous communities and volunteers, have a voice in shaping fire management strategies. Participants also identified the need to focus management beyond the public estate to encompass the entire landscape, including private property. This holistic approach recognises the interconnectedness of fire management across different land tenures. It involves communication and collaboration across expansive landscapes to coordinate managed burns and minimise their impact on biodiversity, including on important stands and feed trees. Collaborating with stakeholders in fire management becomes especially crucial in sensitive areas with significant ecological value.

Cultural awareness and sensitivity were emphasised as valuable components of fire management strategies. Plans such as the Koori Inclusion Action Plan are considered essential tools for fostering cultural understanding and combating discrimination. Incorporating traditional burning methods that utilise natural resources instead of fuel such as petrol is seen as less damaging to the environment and better for soil biodiversity.

Participants discussed the necessity of a proactive approach to fire management, advocating for preemptive measures rather than reactionary responses. Participants explored the potential of this strategy to include a focus on education and investing in permanent forest health. For instance, by investing in employment that centres on the long-term well-being of forests, communities can simultaneously promote ecological sustainability and economic growth. This approach aligns with the broader goal of achieving more robust and resilient landscapes while also providing meaningful employment prospects. Further, through education about practical solutions to manage fire threats, communities are given agency to take proactive steps to mitigate fire risks and foster more resilient ecosystems. For instance, learning about and adopting firewise gardening practices by using fire-resistant plants and thoughtful landscape design to safeguard homes and communities from the dangers of wildfires. By implementing such measures, communities can reduce the risk of property damage and enhance overall safety. Further, participants highlighted the importance of dispelling the demonisation of fire and forests and rekindling a positive relationship with nature by reshaping people's perception of smoke and its role in the ecosystem.

Another crucial aspect that was raised is effective communication, which is paramount for community safety. Establishing continuous year-round communication channels between communities, government agencies, and the media is seen by dialogue participants as essential. This ongoing dialogue is vital for consolidating interests and priorities, thereby

enhancing the overall effectiveness of fire management efforts. This also extends to the need for consistent communication beyond fire seasons, ensuring that the public remains informed and prepared.

Community Management and Alternative Governance

Key Insights

A recurring key theme throughout the Dialogue was the urgent need to transform forest management to ensure that management decisions are happening on Country and in communities. Underpinning this was the primary insight that city-centric and bureaucratic approaches often result in top-down solutions that do not adequately address the unique needs of local communities. Participants stressed the importance of facilitating stakeholder input into forest management plans rather than imposing decisions from above. When decisions are driven by communities, they are more likely to be appropriate, effective, responsive and thus, sustainable. Thus, the government's role needs to shift from one of dictation to facilitation. A key focus which emerged from this theme was the necessity of developing the communities operational and governance capabilities in forest management. Prioritising adaptive governance models over centralised approaches and investing in leadership development were identified as essential steps. Upskilling current leaders was highlighted as a means to enhance the effectiveness of forest management.

Concerns and challenges

Several concerns and challenges were identified during the discussions. One key issue that was raised was that when governments are in charge of decision making regarding how forests are managed, it often results in employing risk-averse forest management practices. These often lead to the unnecessary degradation of forest ecology. Participants raised concern that when people who know and care for the forests are not involved in management it leads to unnecessary harm. How to encourage further participation in forest management from the community was identified as a challenge. Factors such as housing affordability and land affordability were identified as incentives for individuals to move elsewhere, potentially affecting community dynamics. Addressing these concerns and challenges is essential for building a more inclusive and effective community-based approach to forest management.

Participants expressed concerns about elitist decision-making by the government, highlighting the limited involvement of the timber industry in these processes during the transition. Participants noted that employees in the sector were said to be facing significant challenges related to supply and accessibility of funding. This kind of decision making which does not involve, but severely impacts, the community was highlighted as a major concern. There was some language used in discussions over the weekend which was acknowledged as needing modification. It was emphasised that the goal should not be to demonise individuals or organisations but to acknowledge the need for change constructively. Perceptions were deemed crucial, and efforts should be directed towards

building community confidence and addressing public perceptions.

Opportunities

To address these challenges, participants highlighted the importance of encouraging governments to devolve and delegate their power to local communities. This can be achieved through community co-design, transparency, and accountability mechanisms. The overarching goal is to empower local communities and ensure they have a meaningful say in decisions that impact their regions, thereby nurturing more inclusive and sustainable forest management practices. The discussions revealed several promising opportunities. Building trust within communities through transparent decision-making processes which actively involve community input was identified as a critical avenue for progress. Participants identified opportunities stemming from education and training programs, with special attention given to disconnected communities, to incentivise involvement with forest management. These opportunities offer a pathway toward more inclusive and effective forest management practices. Incentives to encourage community participation in sustainable development efforts, such as addressing housing and land affordability, was identified as key steps towards positive change.

Holistic approaches that prioritise the sustainability of local communities should be adopted. This entails considering not only ecological but also socioeconomic factors in forest management decisions. Further, learning from past mistakes was emphasised, particularly related to legislation and forest management. Adaptive management was seen as a dynamic process that involves improving existing frameworks based on experience rather than abandoning them. Exemplary models like the Latrobe Valley Authority, which focuses on reskilling and workforce diversification, were cited as sources of inspiration for other regions, including forestry areas. Using models such as SMART specialisation which utilises a strength based approach, and involves collaboration between government, industry, and academia, was highlighted as a means to identify innovation opportunities. Participants highlighted that we need to think more realistically about how to make communities sustainable.

Plantations and Future Supply of Forest Products

While this was a theme very briefly identified in the scoping paper, it was decided not to be explored during the What's Next dialogue primarily because the next 'Yarram' Dialogue will focus on this theme. Regardless, the theme of where a sustainable timber supply would be sourced from following the cessation of native forest harvesting and that there was a risk in acquiring timber from overseas where legislation around industry impacts may be looser, it was agreed that the current and past extraction of forest products had led to the degradation we see in our forests today. Thinning the forests as a means of enhancing forest health while extracting timber was spoken about, however, this was identified as a fracture line between participants. Sustainable and biodiverse rich plantations on existing farmland were acknowledged as a potential solution.

Cross-cutting themes

This section explores emergent dialogue themes that cut across the topics of Forest health, First Nations, Fire Management, Community Management and Plantations. They reflect topics and/or overarching themes that arose regularly in discussions among participants and were subsequently documented by Co-Chairs during the dialogue process. Cross-cutting themes that emerged during the GFD Scoping Dialogue include:

- Truth-telling and transparency
- Landscape-scale or holistic management
- The need to develop capability and funding
- The importance of policy reform

Truth-telling and transparency

In line with the Dialogue's focus on First Nations engagement, a powerful theme which emerged was the importance of truth-telling. Participants acknowledged the important role truth plays in creating the foundations of trust in order to move forward together. It was suggested that without properly acknowledging the past, including what has got us to this point, we not only risk repeating mistakes but also fail to acknowledge the pain that past practices have created, obscuring a strong relational ground from which to work together to achieve a healthier future for our forests. For this reason, the Dialogue prioritised acknowledging and discussing the 'challenges' to overcome first and foremost.

Landscape-scale or holistic management

Reference to the inadequacy and inability of 'siloes' management approaches to accommodate for multiple, interacting forest components, values, uses and processes was a key theme for the duration of the Dialogue. In other words, management has to reflect the reality of our forests as complex systems or wholes. Participants considered it important that multiple cross-cutting forest functions and values, as well as the context in which these operate, be appropriately considered as part of holistic management. This is also in line with the GunaiKurnai 'whole of Country' principles and approach. There was a recognised need to move towards more integrated, holistic and adaptive forest management and governance approaches, both geographically (e.g. across tenure, forest types etc.) and thematically, i.e. recognising that different forest constituents, values and processes, such as biodiversity, water, industry, fire, cultural landscapes, climate change, and society, are interrelated and interdependent. Without this, participants acknowledged that we could not address the health of the forest, including the protection of species across scale.

It was considered that decentralised approaches may better create the enabling conditions for holistic management for multiple forest values at local levels. However, the need for

coordinated and integrated landscape-scale management, in addition to locally-specific (e.g. site and community-based) approaches to tackle big issues (e.g. connectivity, climate change, fire management, etc.), and how to effectively achieve this balance, remains a key area worthy of further exploration.

Capability and funding

Over the dialogue, there was a general concern regarding the disparity between available funding and capability and the scale of work needed to restore the Gippsland forests to a healthy state. For instance, it was noted that despite the overwhelming presence of potential biodiversity conservation projects, there is a lack of adequate funding for these initiatives. Participants expressed weariness regarding elitist decision making and the way that funding has been delivered by government in the past. Often communities have not been involved in the decision making, meaning that funding becomes irrelevant, inaccessible and ineffective. Participants also noted the importance of ensuring that funding sources are transparent. Another key thread of the weekend's discussion was that there is not enough support for both the education in, and transfer of expertise regarding forest management to the next generation.

One of the breakout groups focused on addressing the complex challenges of capability and funding on day three. Participants discussed the importance of developing a comprehensive master plan that incorporates the perspectives of stakeholders and community groups. This plan should balance priorities, foster integration, and ensure an equitable priority-setting process that avoids favouring any single interest group. To achieve this, participants highlighted the importance of engaging various streams of stakeholders, including local community members, citizen scientists, young people, schools, and local business groups. These stakeholders were identified as not only bringing unique viewpoints but serving as potentially valuable funding sources. Additionally, exploring diverse funding models, such as contributions from discrete users or beneficiaries of forest resources, could help sustain conservation and management efforts.

Participants explored ideas to address the talent gap and make forest management more accessible, proposing that efforts should be made to reduce barriers to education and learning, such as the increased cost of environmental science degrees. Government funding remains crucial, but exploring secure funding sources from forest-based activities is equally important. Attracting funding from external sources through ecotourism initiatives and corporate sponsorships can contribute to citizen science projects and the sustainable management of forests. This includes the development of sustainable self-funding models. Initiatives focused on forest care, such as involving community members in stewardship and conservation activities, should be considered.

Moreover, it is essential to strengthen storytelling capabilities to effectively communicate a collective vision for forest management possibilities, with recognition of the role governments can play in supporting this vision. Housing options, whether temporary or

voluntary, should be seen as enablers for individuals engaged in forest management.

Policy and legislation

Over the Dialogue, there was an overarching emphasis of the need for a comprehensive reform exercise in forest governance. This includes breaking down silos, adopting a holistic view of forests, and moving beyond the limitations imposed by political cycles. Further, participants highlighted the need to harmonise interests with regional and state objectives.

One of the breakout groups focused on this issue on day three. They explored a vision for a reformed and decentralised forest governance system, emphasising community involvement, clear policy objectives, and innovative financial mechanisms. This new model involves local boards, potentially referred to as stewardship boards, governed by representatives in power. These boards would be responsible and accountable for achieving key indicators and objectives, with representation from First Nations and local communities. They would be responsible for preparing, developing and implementing forest management plans. The group suggested the use of indicators as part of the strategies for forest management. These indicators are intended to be more simple and translatable than those developed by ecologists. Community health is suggested as one indicator, and community members are proposed as shareholders in the governance boards. Further, establishing Healthy Forest Policy Groups could potentially play a role in shaping forest policies and governance.

The concept of a forest resilience bond, which combines public and private funding, was explored as a way to secure resources for forest management and conservation. This bond is seen as a mechanism for community investment with the potential for returns over time. Further, the group introduced the idea of a reserve power under which the boards would be monitored so the state could intervene if they are not functioning effectively or if corruption is detected.

Fracture lines

The Co-Chairs identified the following ‘fracture lines’ – defined as sources of points of disagreement and uncertainty between stakeholders – which came through in discussions during the GFD ‘What’s Next’ Dialogue. This is not an exhaustive list, or comprehensive analysis of the varying views and opinions underpinning each fracture line described. It is acknowledged that additional fracture lines will likely emerge during ensuing dialogue discussions.

Although the issues presented in this section are contentious and risk alienating participants from the GFD process, there is a greater risk of leaving these topics unresolved; it will be more important to bring these tensions to the surface, where they may be respectfully addressed, for the group to progress in a meaningful way. It is hoped

that a respected and knowledgeable GFD will have influence on the forming up and carriage of these critical discussions moving forward.

Ecological, climate, and biodiversity crisis

Over the weekend, a fracture line appeared as to whether there was the existence of an ecological, climate, and biodiversity crisis. This was acknowledged by some as a foundational issue that needs to be addressed to move forward collaboratively.

Cause of mismanagement and discussions regarding extraction

There was debate over the primary cause of mismanagement in forests, with tension between fire management and logging practices. Further, the debate over forest harvesting practices was a fracture line, including whether thinning is a healthy or unhealthy approach to management. This was underpinned by a larger fracture line regarding the question of extraction. Some participants wanted a clear response as to whether there was an agreement that there would be no extraction moving forward.

Competing science

The Dialogue highlighted that there is a challenge in making sense of competing and sometimes contradictory scientific research. This led to participants discussing the perception that science, when funded by particular organisations, is not 'clean' and therefore may be questioned in terms of its reliability and accuracy. This also led to a discussion on the limitations of funding opportunities for science - most research is funded by some kind of governmental, industry or non-governmental organisation, and without this funding much forest-related research would simply not occur. Nonetheless, it creates limitations for academics regarding the scope of research.

Flexibility and regulation

A fracture line which emerged related to considerations of what future management of forests may look like. As already discussed in this report, there was a general recognition of a need for adaptive, decentralised and flexible management in managing forests; however, a concern raised with this approach would be how this is effectively regulated, particularly in context of overarching frameworks like the precautionary principle.

Forest values

Over the course of the Dialogue, there were a number of unresolved questions, including: what do we mean by 'forest assets'? What defines a 'healthy forest'? What is 'old growth' forest, and are current definitions adequate? While there was broad agreement on the movement towards a healthy forest, there were concerns regarding objectives and motives. Values were indicated to be a bigger driver of management than science. This underpinned a particular concern that profit driven management was a threat to a healthy forest.

SECTION 3: REFLECTIONS



Learnings for future dialogues

The 'What's Next Dialogue offered a unique opportunity for participants to consider the future for Gippsland's forests, through the lens of an optimistic, solutions-based focus. This focus had both positive and negative aspects. During the facilitation of the dialogue, challenges and learnings arose regarding holding events of this kind. Some observations and reflections include:

- The need to be mindful that the context set by GFD and Co-Chairs can have a significant impact on the direction and content of discussions and there is a need to ensure all perspectives are reflected for unbiased dialogue.
- Aim for future dialogues to be more focused, with less ground to cover allowing time for in-depth exploration of key, priority issues and fracture lines.
- Focus on building participants' trust in the GFD process.
- The need to acknowledge the difficulty of asking participants to leave their professional hats at the door.
- More time outside to break up the time spent sitting inside.

A broader learning is the recognition that there is no one 'perfect dialogue', but rather, the dialogue process itself is an ongoing journey of refinement and learning.

'What's Next' Dialogue process and limitations

The 'What's Next' Dialogue had an ambitious agenda, including broad exploration of five themes identified by the Advisory Group and outlined in the Scoping Paper. The dialogue was able to explore certain areas in relatively good detail. In particular, the breakout discussions provided participants with the opportunity to explore key issues in depth. Despite enthusiasm from participants to explore a range of ideas, the broad scope, large numbers of topics and limited time meant the dialogue was unable to explore all topics in detail. As a result, there was a lot that didn't get covered out of the necessity of trying to give time to all of the themes. Due to the enthusiasm of participants to continue with conversations that were occurring during breaks, it was often hard to stick to the time frame. These informal discussions also provided participants with time to address certain topics which may not be addressed in the 'formal' parts of the dialogue.

The Field day set out to put the key themes into context through site visits. Notably, opportunities to put into context the themes of biodiversity and conservation were limited, as one participant expressed on the morning of the first plenary day, we only "scratched the surface of how forestry has been impacting biodiversity". The lack of field sites which focused on conservation and habitat probably had an impact on the prominence of these topics in group discussions. Further, participants were not exposed to the extensive catchment and ecological damage done in the high fire intensity sites. The absence of these sites may have been a barrier to an in-depth understanding of the

impacts of current forest management.

One of the limitations identified was that there is still work to be done to build an understanding about the what and why of GFD. This lack of understanding was identified as a limitation to broader participation. Whilst the dialogue was designed as a platform that provides an opportunity for everyone to take leadership and have their voice in the future of the forest, a comment was made that before attending the Dialogue the GFD appeared like a secret society. This lack of understanding may have underpinned concerns by some participants that due to the anonymity of the report, the process could platform certain opinions which were not representative of certain attendees. This acted as a barrier to trust for some participants, potentially limiting the depth of dialogue. To build trust regarding the neutrality of GFD as a platform, it is imperative for future dialogues that the Advisory Group and the Co-chairs reflect a diversity of perspectives. Articulating clarity regarding the process and intended outcome of the Dialogue and addressing any concerns at the beginning of future dialogues could help to manage this concern. Whilst the co-chairs did an amazing job at facilitating, having a professional facilitator who brings independence and experience could help to foster a sense of neutrality, trust and timekeeping and could be an important addition for follow-up dialogues. Additionally, determining how much time to spend on visioning alternative futures versus discussing the challenges of the past is a difficult task for co-chairs. The co-chairs began the Dialogue discussions by exploring the challenges of the past as a way to undertake 'truth-telling' and to ensure the Dialogue finished on more positive, future-focused discussions- however, starting with a discussion of challenges may have reinforced past approaches, conflicts and tensions regarding forest management. Starting with collectively envisioning an alternative future for the forests could have acted to build trust and put people into a state of imagination and possibility, however may have risked avoiding the 'difficult' conversations. Finding the right balance between the two approaches will be an ongoing task for future dialogues.

While the Dialogue group was diverse, there were gaps in stakeholder representation which are referenced throughout this report. This was reflected in participant feedback that there was an under-representation of conservation groups, ecologists, First Nations people, forest user groups and forest recreation groups during the Dialogue. Concern was raised that without this input the outcomes for forest health would miss some key perspectives. For example, while Traditional Custodians were consulted by the GFD in the process leading up to the dialogue, there was only one Traditional Custodian present for the duration of the Dialogue as part of the dialogue group. The Dialogue was made more rich by their participation. However, there was also a desire for further and enhanced participation. Since the inception of the GFD over 2 years ago significant effort has been put in to try and encourage participation from Environmental NGOs and First Nations groups. This work is ongoing and will remain a key focus for the GFD.

Numbers dropped off on the last day, which meant the same group of people were not present through the entirety of the Dialogue. Strategies to maintain participants'

attendance for the duration of the Dialogue should be considered for the future. This may include spending more time outside or changing the length of the event. Unfortunately, due to limited numbers on day 3, there were not enough participants, which meant there was no breakout group focusing on engagement and opportunities for First Nations forest management.

Participant feedback

Feedback from participants was solicited both during the dialogue process and through a feedback survey completed after the conclusion of the Dialogue.

Post-dialogue survey

Twelve people responded to the post-dialogue survey (approx. 30% of attendees), and all indicated that the Dialogue helped to advance their thinking on the challenges and opportunities related to the scoping paper. Nine of the 12 participants who completed the survey identified the ability to engage with a diversity of participants in non-confrontational ways to be the highlight of the GFD. However, there were concerns among a minority of survey respondents that the event was too dominated by what they believe to be timber industry perspectives. While 11 of the 12 participants expressed that they would attend the dialogue again, one participant expressed that they wouldn't attend a further dialogue for this reason.

Themes that were identified for future focus included:

- 'Healthy EcoSystem Forest'
- 'Active forest management to maximize forest health and resilience across all forest/land tenures'
- 'Fire mitigation management - including TO practices'
- 'Divesting responsibilities to Community level management - not Melbourne centric'
- 'What effective bush management will be like, especially the remote country management. Getting and training managers and workers for bush work'
- 'Challenges in Plantation forest'
- 'Plantation establishment re establishment of native timber utilisation'
- 'Community Forest management'

Suggestions for other stakeholders to invite to future GFDs included VicForests staff and contractors, a more diverse range of academic researchers, a wider range of Traditional Owner groups and First Nations people, Responsible Wood and FSC representatives, Catchment Management Authority staff, more conservation group representatives, and bush users such as fishers, shooters, campers and bike riders.

Feedback on the Field Day

Feedback from some participants on the field day suggested that it could have been enhanced by including visits to conservation zones and national park areas to assess the broader state of forests, which they believed would help illustrate that issues like fire, feral animal impacts, and weed infestations affect all forests, rather than solely attributing the current state to past harvesting practices. Another respondent proposed visiting active coupes, including ones that have undergone burning and ripping, and those handed back by Vicforests as 'regenerated areas' to provide a more comprehensive view.

Additionally, it was recommended that the Gippsland Forest Dialogue should pursue enhanced representation from different members of local First Nations communities to reflect a broader range of viewpoints on forest management. Some participants felt that the Gippsland Forest Dialogue did not adequately explore or give voice to this diversity of opinions.

A general view among the feedback was the importance of adhering to the allotted time frame and maintaining a neutral tone during site introductions. Given the varied composition of the group, time management and avoiding personal and emotive language were deemed essential considerations for a productive dialogue.

Scoping Paper and Context Setting Feedback

Some respondents expressed concerns about the format and content of the Scoping Paper and Dialogue itself, and felt that the allocated time for discussion of the questions posed by the Scoping Paper was insufficient, given the complexity of the topics at hand. Others called for nuance, balance, and open discussion without constraints, highlighting that while the process was well-designed, it required more time for thorough exploration.

Further Feedback

There were a variety of perspectives on the Dialogue program and its outcomes. Overall, the Gippsland Forest Dialogue was recognised as valuable for facilitating respectful conversations among participants with differing or complementary views. Suggestions were made for improving the Gippsland Forest Dialogue model, such as introducing a moderator or setting clear ground rules to prevent disparaging remarks and insults. Maintaining harmony and tolerance within the group was deemed essential. Additionally, some respondents felt that new participants needed more time to familiarise themselves with the Gippsland Forest Dialogue (GFD) before fully engaging in the discussions.

Perhaps stemming from this lack of familiarity with the Dialogue process and the people involved, one critique was raised regarding the perceived dominance of industry interests and the control exerted by steering committee members over the narrative. This was seen as hindering in-depth discussions about: the historical impact of logging on biodiversity; the consequences of recurring burning cycles on forest recovery; climate challenges, and independent oversight of fire mitigation efforts, among other topics.

Acknowledgements

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Group discussion surrounding the campfire at Lake Tyres in Nowa Nowa

APPENDICES

Participants list

Abigail Wills	Ian Cane	Mark Coleman
Alastair Woodard	Israel Adesko	Michelle Freeman
Alena Walmsley	Jason Alexandra	Mick Harrington
Aly Nichol	Jess Reeves	Neil Barraclough
Charmaine Sellings	Jim Phillipson	Oli Moraes
Chris McEvoy	Joanne Lewis	Paul Haar
Daniel Salzmann	John Applby	Peter Camilleri
Daniel Miller	Julia Croatto	Phillip Vaughan
Dave Gover	Julie-Anne O'Neil	Rodney Keenan
Deborah Milligan	Jyoti Kala	Sebastian Klein
Elmas Mathews	Keith Ritchie	Steve Mathews
Ewan Waller	Lesia Goodwin	Thomas Fairman
Fiacre Ryan	Liz Langford	Tim Lee
Grace Waller	Luke McEvoy	Tom Crook
Harry Barton	Madeleine Rzesniowiecki	Tristan Hennessy
Heather Phillipson	Marc Perri	Tshering Lama O'Gordon

Event overview

Agenda- Friday 15 September

Informal meet and greet at the Bush Cafe, Forestec
Introduction to the concept of the Gippsland Forest Dialogue.
Individual Introductions including name and background

- Stop 1 - Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust -LTAT (Morning tea)
- Stop 2 -Fairweather track, Wairewa (Lunch)
- Stop 3: Lambournes Break
- Stop 4: Campground

Agenda- Saturday 16 September

Summary of field trip

Group reflections on observations and learnings from the field trip, including:

- Reintroduce yourself
- What did you learn from the field trip?
- What do you hope to get out of the dialogue?

Overview: what do we want to achieve today?

Ground rules and overview

Carousel Breakout – Challenges and Opportunities for change (Brainstorm Session)

- What are the opportunities and what are the challenges beyond 2024? Across the four key

Report back and discussion

(GROUP DINNER - Central Hotel, Lakes Entrance)

Agenda- Sunday 17 September

Session with Charmaine

Co-Chair Presentation

Any feedback, questions, discussion points arising What haven't we covered?

Remaining burning issues?

Carousel Breakout – Opportunities for Change (Deep Dive)

- Opportunities for: Forest health, Fire management, capabilities and funding, policy and legislation or First Nations and community

(MORNING TEA – interim)

Report back and discussion

Discussion regarding the future of GFD,

(DIALOGUE CLOSE)

Mudmap of field trip



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For more information about the
Gippsland Forest Dialogue visit:

www.gippslandforestdialogue.org.au



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