

Jindivick Dialogue Great Outdoors (Nov 2024)



Engage • Explore • Change

In November 2024, in our 5th dialogue we met to discuss the future of recreation in our forests.

The discussion was timely given the Government had established a Great Outdoors taskforce to provide recommendations for the future management of our forests with an emphasis on recreation. We used the outcomes of our dialogue as a submission to the taskforce.

Engage

25 people, mostly from West Gippsland gathered in Jindivick and put forward a diversity of views and ideas including:

- that Gippslanders highly value their forests but this is not reflected in Government policy or investment
- Some areas are being negatively impacted by overuse, need to balance equity of access with protection of other values
- government consultation processes are disempowering and not trusted
- young people are not being adequately consulted
- new approaches to managing and funding recreation are needed
- a behavioural charter across all forest users and recreation groups is needed .



Gippsland Forest Dialogue
www.gippslandforestdialogue.org.au

Explore

The dialogue identified 5 themes to frame discussion.

Local problems, local solutions

- Allow local managers and communities who understand the issues and area to be involved in solutions

Transparency of policy

- There is a sense of a lack of opportunity for local input into policy leading to a lack of trust and accountability

Education

- People are more disconnected from forests than previously and lack awareness of issues such as safety, care and appreciation

Value

- How do we value enjoyment of forests, provide equity of access but fund upkeep of recreation sites

Charter of common ground

- A set of principles that can be shared by different forest users.



Change

So what can we do? The dialogue explored opportunities for collaborative action.

- Increase the capacity for local decision making
- Integrate Traditional owner interpretation and protection of cultural values in site management
- New stewardship models allowing user group participation
- Support for citizen science and increased education to increase awareness and behaviour of visitors
- Development of a Charter of common ground, an intergenerational agreement on shared values, and aspirations and responsibilities for care when enjoying the forests



Fracture lines (points of disagreement or uncertainty between stakeholders):

- 4wd access in high conservation areas
- User pays principle for recreational groups
- Impacts of recreation on other forest values

Summary

The Gippsland Forest Dialogue report from Jindivick was submitted to the Government's Great Outdoors committee as input to their considerations on the future of forests and recreation.

The dialogue provided a foundation for further exploration of the challenges and opportunities of forest recreation at our Heyfield dialogue in 2025.

See the full report on our webpage