

Rawson Dialogue Scoping GFD (Nov 2022)



Engage • Explore • Change

In 2022, Gippsland established the first Australian Forest Dialogue group using an internationally recognised methodology to bring people together to talk about the future of our forests.

Rawson was the first dialogue undertaken to scope out the approach and how it may be applied to Gippslands forests.

Engage

In November 2022 20 forestry management experts, academics, conservation scientists and campaigners and other Gippslanders interested in our forests got together to explore the Forest Dialogue approach and consider how it might apply to the forests of Gippsland.

- Six themes, important to the future of the forests were identified for discussion : climate change, fire, cultural landscapes, water, industry and biodiversity.

The outcome sought was connection, building relationships and respecting others views, and looking for ways to collaborate .

Explore

Major takeaways from the discussion was a sense of urgency given impacts of climate, social and biodiversity crises, exacerbated by megafires and unsustainable forest extraction.

There was also a sense of frustration with normal siloed centralised approaches and a desire to try new new approaches.

There was a desire to explore decentralised community based models of forest management



Gippsland Forest Dialogue
www.gippslandforestdialogue.org.au

Explore

Biodiversity:

- Need to increase public awareness and education on importance
- Need more active management of threats like pests, fires and logging

Fire

- Concern regarding recent megafires and perceived changed structure of forests with thick young regrowth

Industry

- How industry can diversify, reduce their impact and enhance forest values
- How we can meet community demand for timber

Climate

- How can we make our forests more resilient and enhance carbon sequestration

Water

- The role of forests in clean water supply and regulating flow is undervalued

Traditional owners

- Need to be involved and their knowledge respected



Change

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

- Explore the hard issues, eg fracture lines.
- Trial community based management models
- Establish pilot projects to test and refine alternate forest management practices
- Involve Traditional owners in the dialogue process
- Conduct a themed dialogue on native forest logging
- Establish working groups on communications and specific dialogue themes



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

- Sustainable forest harvesting and impact on other values
- Language use and agreement on terms, for example what is old growth

Summary

The four day event confirmed the importance of talking about our forests and making sure all voices are heard.

Participant reflection.....“The Gippsland Forest Dialogue is the single most important forestry initiative in Australia. This is of, by and for the community. This is not experts paid for by the Government telling people what to do.”

See the full report on our webpage