

Yarram Dialogue Plantations (Nov 2023)



Engage • Explore • Change

Exploring the past, present and futures of Gippsland's planted forests.

Plantations provide timber but play a role in ecosystem function, biodiversity, fire, climate change mitigation, water quality, carbon accrual and recreation. They contribute to the health of the broader landscape and the people who live in it.

Engage

Over 40 people came together on 10-11 November, at Yarram to discuss the values, management and use of plantations in Gippsland.

Three key themes for used to structure the conversation:

- the role of plantations in landscape health and their environmental impact
- the role of plantations in community wellbeing and culture
- the role of plantations in timber production



Explore

some of the concepts discussed included:

- Building a sense of ownership and stewardship between community members and plantations through recreation, tourism and employment
- Generating pilot projects, demonstration sites and case studies to encourage investor confidence in innovation, sustainability and value/job rich products
- Encourage multi stage farms and plantations as solutions to landscape challenges such as water quality, carbon accrual, fire and biodiversity



Gippsland Forest Dialogue
www.gippslandforestdialogue.org.au

Explore

Concerns discussed included:

- plantations are privately owned as commercial enterprises, within landscapes that hold values in the public interest. Need to prioritise investment that balances private and public objectives
- Community consultation during harvesting operations to limit impacts on people and the environment
- Integrating landscape health factors in plantation management, eg connectivity of native vegetation, stream buffers, fuel management, biodiversity habitat
- Improve farm forest education to drive more efficient planting and achieve multiple benefits
- Engagement with community on use of chemicals and management of pests plants and animals
- The fire risk of plantations and the use of fire in their management



Change

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

- Establish working groups on education, biodiversity and carbon accrual
- Conduct a dialogue on industry transformation and barriers to investment
- Increase plantation manager links to landcare, farm forestry and catchment health
- Encourage processing industry development and innovation
- Inform wood users and buyers of local production opportunities
- Work with neighbours to protect and connect remnant bush.



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

- Private versus public interest
- The investment environment
- Reliance on limited species pool
- Land use competition
- Fire risk of plantations
- Cash flow challenges of plantation establishment

Summary

The Gippsland community wants the employment and prosperity that can be generated from a viable plantation industry, but does not want this industry to over exploit the community or natural environment. Understanding what the community expects of plantation management includes understanding how communities live within a landscape that includes plantations.

See the full report on our webpage