

VICTORIAN REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENTS

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2000

East Gippsland

Central Highlands

North East Victoria

West Victoria

Gippsland

VICTORIAN REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2000

This report covers all five Victorian Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs):

- East Gippsland – signed February 1997
- Central Highlands – signed March 1998
- North East Victoria – signed August 1999
- West Victoria – signed March 2000
- Gippsland – signed March 2000

It fulfils the obligations under clause 25 of the East Gippsland RFA, clause 35 of the Central Highlands and North East Victoria RFAs, and clause 36 of the West Victoria and Gippsland RFAs whereby the parties to the Agreements are to report annually on the milestones set out in those Agreements. The milestones are set out in Attachments 3 (East Gippsland) and 4 (Central Highlands, North East Victoria, West Victoria and Gippsland) of the RFAs, and are outlined in Tables 1 - 5 of this report.

The parties have agreed to provide the annual reports on milestones for all completed RFAs simultaneously.

While the main focus of this report is on milestones due for completion by the end of 2000, detail on significant action towards other milestones is also provided. Some milestone dates in the East Gippsland, Central Highlands and North East Victoria RFAs were amended in the West Victoria and Gippsland RFAs. The amended dates are reflected in this Annual Report.

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Table 1. Milestone Implementation - East Gippsland

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
20	Commonwealth to seek passage of amendments to woodchip export regulations under the <i>Export Control Act 1982</i> .	June 1997	Milestone completed in April 1997.
29	Victoria to implement an on-going quality assurance programme.	2002 ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of Catchment Management Authorities participated in the 2000 annual audit of the <i>Code of Forest Practices for Timber Production</i>. ▪ An independent hydrology study of the effect of timber harvesting on water quality and yield was completed. ▪ Independent reviews of harvesting practices, pricing of timber produce and sustainable yield forecasting methods were initiated. ▪ Draft Statewide utilisation procedures to provide uniform procedures for control of harvesting on public land across the State was developed and will be publicly available in 2001. ▪ Establishment of a pilot program to trial the use of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards for the timber industry was progressed through meetings with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Broad agreement has been reached regarding processes to identify a site for the trial.
34	Victoria to complete and publish regional prescriptions for timber production.	December 1998 ²	Milestone completed by December 1998.

¹ Original milestone date (2000) amended in clause 44 of the North East Victoria RFA.

² Original milestone date (December 1997) amended in clause 45 of the Central Highlands RFA.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
34	Victoria to use its best endeavours to complete and publish management plans for all National and State Parks.	December 1998	All but three park plans were completed and published by the end of 1998. The remaining three plans are essentially complete, but are undergoing additional consultation with aboriginal communities under the Native Title Act. The National Park Act requires a management plan to be prepared for each national and State park.
34	Victoria to implement the Integrated Forest Planning System and the Statewide Forest Resource Inventory for East Gippsland.	31 December 2005 ³	Development of the Statewide Forest Resource Inventory (SFRI) for East Gippsland is in progress. The mapping component of the SFRI has been completed and the inventory component is in progress.
38	Victoria and the Commonwealth to assess the outcomes of the Montreal Process Implementation Group (MIG) process.	December 1997	Milestone completed in December 1997 through Victoria's input and agreement to the "Framework of Regional (Sub-National) Level Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management in Australia".
40	Victoria and the Commonwealth to develop sustainability indicators.	2002	A framework to develop sustainability indicators in conjunction with the Victorian State of the Forest Report has been agreed by the State and Commonwealth. Research is being conducted in Victoria to develop and test various sustainability indicators. A data collection program commenced for Montreal Process Category A indicators in all regions of the state. These data will be used to assist in the program to develop RFA indicators of sustainable forest management by RFA areas.

³ Original milestone date (2001) amended in Attachment 10 (Table 1) of the Gippsland and West Victoria RFAs.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
45	Victoria and the Commonwealth to undertake and where relevant complete threatened species work as detailed in Attachment 4 (of the East Gippsland RFA).	2002	Work is well advanced on the preparation of Action Statements and Recovery Plans for 10 species. Action Statements have been completed for the Powerful Owl, Brush-tailed Phascogale, Eastern Bristlebird, Yellow Hyacinth Orchid (<i>Dipodium hamiltonianum</i>) and Silurian Limestone <i>Pomaderris</i> Shrubland. Nomination for the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act listing has been completed for Limestone Blue Wattle (<i>Acacia caerulescens</i>) and Mignonette Leek-Orchid (<i>Prasophyllum morganii</i>).
46	Victoria to develop programs for pest plant and pest animal control.	2002	Victoria is currently developing a Victorian Pest Management Strategy that will provide a framework for development of more detailed strategies or programs within each region.
49	Victoria to implement agreed tenure changes to establish the CAR Reserve System.	February 1998	Completed. The tenure changes were legislated in November 1998 and proclaimed in April 1999.
51	Victoria to publish an amendment to the East Gippsland Forest Management Area Plan.	June 1997	Milestone completed in June 1997.
56	Commonwealth to seek to remove export controls for timber sourced from all Victorian plantations.	March 1997	Milestone completed in March 1997.
61	Victoria to complete a review in accordance with the Competition Principles Agreement.	1999	Milestone completed in May 1999.
64	Victoria to publish its rainforest research.	1998 ⁴	Milestone completed in December 1998.

⁴ Original milestone date (December 1997) amended in Attachment 1 of the Central Highlands RFA.

67	Victoria and the Commonwealth develop a Data Agreement and lodge archival copies of data	Data schedule by 30 June 2000; lodge archived data by 31 March 2001 ⁵	State-wide data agreement signed on 28 March 2000. Work towards finalising data schedules and lodging archival copies of data is progressing.
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⁵ Original milestone date (June 1997) amended in clause 84 of the North East RFA to allow the development of both a schedule to the Statewide Data Agreement, and the lodgement of archival copies of data, by 31 March 2000. These dates were further amended in clause 92 of both the West Victoria and Gippsland RFAs, committing Victoria and the Commonwealth to develop a schedule to the Statewide Data Agreement by 30 June 2000, and to lodge archival copies of data by 31 March 2001.

Table 2. Milestone Implementation - Central Highlands

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
44	Victoria to implement an ongoing Quality Assurance Program.	2002 ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of Catchment Management Authorities participated in the 2000 annual audit of the <i>Code of Forest Practices for Timber Production</i>. ▪ An independent hydrology study of the effect of timber harvesting on water quality and yield was completed. ▪ Independent reviews of harvesting practices, pricing of timber produce and sustainable yield forecasting methods were initiated. ▪ Draft Statewide utilisation procedures to provide uniform procedures for control of harvesting on public land across the State was developed and will be publicly available in 2001. ▪ Establishment of a pilot program to trial the use of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards for the timber industry was progressed through meetings with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Broad agreement has been reached regarding processes to identify a site for the trial.
45	Victoria to complete and publish regional prescriptions for timber production.	December 1998	Milestone completed by December 1998.

⁶ Original milestone date (2000) amended in clause 44 of the North East Victoria RFA.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
45	Victoria to use its best endeavours to complete and publish management plans for all National and State Parks.	December 1998	All but three park plans were completed and published by the end of 1998. The remaining three plans are essentially complete, but are undergoing additional consultation with aboriginal communities under the Native Title Act. The National Park Act requires a management plan to be prepared for each national and State park.
45	Victoria to implement the Integrated Forest Planning System and the Statewide Forest Resource Inventory for the Central Highlands.	Central Gippsland (part) FMA by 31/12/2002; Central and Dandenong FMAs by 31/12/2004. ⁷	Development of the SFRI is in progress. The mapping and the inventory components of the SFRI are complete in the Central Highlands.
50	Victoria and the Commonwealth to develop sustainability indicators.	2002	A framework to develop sustainability indicators in conjunction with the Victorian State of the Forest Report has been agreed by the State and Commonwealth. Research is being conducted in Victoria to develop and test various sustainability indicators. A data collection program commenced for Montreal Process Category A indicators in all regions of the state. These data will be used to assist in the program to develop RFA indicators of sustainable forest management by RFA areas.

⁷ Original milestone date (2001) amended in Attachment 10 (Table 1) of the Gippsland and West Victoria RFAs.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
57	Victoria and the Commonwealth to undertake and where relevant complete threatened species work as detailed in Attachment 2 (of the Central Highlands RFA).	2002	Work is well advanced on the preparation of Action Statements and Recovery Plans for 13 species. Action Statements have been completed for the Warragul Burrowing Crayfish, Curly Sedge (<i>Carex tasmanica</i>), Shiny Nematolepis (<i>Nematolepis willsonii</i>) and Gully Grevillea (<i>Grevillea barklyana</i> ssp. <i>Barklyana</i>). Nomination for the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act listing has been completed for Plains Grassy Woodland (or floristic communities thereof), Valley Grassy Forest (or floristic communities thereof), Grey Goshawk (<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>), Smoky Mouse (<i>Pseudomys fumeus</i>) and Tree Geebung (<i>Persoonia arborea</i>).
59	Victoria to develop programs for pest plant and pest animal control.	2003	Victoria is currently developing a Victorian Pest Management Strategy that will provide a framework for development of more detailed strategies or programs within each region.
65	Victoria to publish a Central Highlands Forest Management Plan.	30 June 1998	Milestone completed in May 1998.
81	Victoria will report on progress toward development of a long term timber harvesting and water production strategy for the Thomson Reservoir catchment.	2002	Significant progress has been made to develop the Macaque model to predict long-term changes in streamflow caused by timber harvesting activities in the Thomson catchment. The model will provide information for the long term strategy for the catchment.
82	Victoria to complete a review in accordance with the Competition Principles Agreement.	1999	Milestone completed in May 1999.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
86	Victoria and the Commonwealth will develop a schedule to the Statewide Data Agreement and lodge archival copies of data. (relevant to the Central Highlands).	Data schedule by 30 June 2000; lodge archived data by 31 March 2001 ⁸	State-wide data agreement signed on 28 March 2000. Work towards finalising data schedules and lodging archival copies of data is progressing.
Attach. 1	Victoria to assess endangered, vulnerable or rare Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) on Melbourne Water Corporation lands (in the Central Highlands).	2002	Ongoing.
Attach. 1	Victoria to prepare Regional Vegetation Plans covering the Central Highlands which provide for the protection of endangered, vulnerable or rare EVCs on private land.	2001	Victoria's Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework and Draft Native Vegetation Plans were released for public consultation in August 2000. The consultation period is continuing.
Attach. 1	Victoria to publish a Technical Report on Rainforest.	1998	Milestone completed in December 1998.
Attach. 3 cl. 5	Victoria and the Commonwealth to prepare Statewide Cultural Heritage Guidelines.	30 June 2000 ⁹	Preparation of the Guidelines has been rescheduled to co-ordinate with the development of the state-wide Aboriginal Heritage Management System following extensive community consultation with indigenous groups. The Guidelines are expected to be completed by 31 March 2002.

⁸ Original milestone date (September 1998) amended in clause 84 of the North East RFA to allow the development of both a schedule to the Statewide Data Agreement, and the lodgement of archival copies of data, by 31 March 2000. These dates were further amended in clause 92 of both the Gippsland and West Victoria RFAs, committing Victoria and the Commonwealth to develop a schedule to the Statewide Data Agreement by 30 June 2000, and to lodge archival copies of data by 31 March 2001.

⁹ Original milestone (December 1999) amended in Attachment 3 of the North East Victoria RFA.

Table 3. Milestone Implementation – North East Victoria

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
35	Parties to report annually on achievement for first five years, and then as part of the 5 yearly review.	Commencing 2000	This is the second annual report.
44	Victoria to implement an on-going quality assurance program.	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of Catchment Management Authorities participated in the 2000 annual audit of the <i>Code of Forest Practices for Timber Production</i>. ▪ An independent hydrology study of the effect of timber harvesting on water quality and yield was completed. ▪ Independent reviews of harvesting practices, pricing of timber produce and sustainable yield forecasting methods were initiated. ▪ Draft Statewide utilisation procedures to provide uniform procedures for control of harvesting on public land across the State was developed and will be publicly available in 2001. ▪ Establishment of a pilot program to trial the use of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards for the timber industry was progressed through meetings with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Broad agreement has been reached regarding processes to identify a site for the trial.
45	Victoria to implement the Integrated Forest Planning System and the Statewide Forest Resource Inventory in the North East region in time for the next review of sustainable yield.	Benalla/ Mansfield FMA by 30/6/2001; Wangaratta and Wodonga FMAs by 31/12/2001 ¹⁰	The SFRI is complete in the North East. Implementation of the Integrated Forest Planning System for the review of sustainable yield in the Benalla/Mansfield, Wangaratta and Wodonga FMAs is in progress to complete this milestone by the due date.

¹⁰ Original milestone date (2001) amended in Attachment 10 (Table 1) of the Gippsland and West Victoria RFAs.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
48 and 50	Victoria and the Commonwealth to develop sustainability indicators.	In time for the first review of this Agreement (2004)	A framework to develop sustainability indicators in conjunction with the Victorian State of the Forest Report has been agreed by the State and Commonwealth. Research is being conducted in Victoria to develop and test various sustainability indicators. A data collection program commenced for Montreal Process Category A indicators in all regions of the state. These data will be used to assist in the program to develop RFA indicators of sustainable forest management by RFA areas.
55-57	Victoria and the Commonwealth to undertake and, where relevant, complete threatened species work as detailed in Attachment 2 (of the North East RFA).	2004	Work is well advanced on the preparation of Action Statements for 4 species. Nomination for the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act listing has been completed for Bandy Bandy (<i>Vermicella annulata</i>), Apostlebird (<i>Struthidea cinerea</i>), Square-tailed Kite (<i>Lophoictinia isura</i>) and Euroa Guinea-flower (<i>Hibbertia humifusa ssp. Erigens</i>).
59	Victoria to develop programs for pest plant and animal control.	2004	Victoria is currently developing a Victorian Pest Management Strategy that will provide a framework for development of more detailed strategies or programs within each region.
62 - Attach. 1	Victoria agrees to implement the agreed land tenure change.	2001	Milestone complete. The legislation was passed in June 2000 and will come into effect on 1 February 2001.
65	Victoria to produce and publish the North East Forest Management Plan.	30 June 2000	Milestone completed in January 2001.
84	Victoria and the Commonwealth to use best endeavours to develop a schedule to the Statewide Data Agreement and lodge archival copies of data.	Data schedule by 30 June 2000; lodge archived data by 31 March 2001 ¹¹	State-wide data agreement signed on 28 March 2000. Work towards finalising data schedules and lodging archival copies of data is progressing.

¹¹ Original milestone date (31/03/2000) amended in clause 92 of the Gippsland and West Victoria RFAs, committing Victoria and the Commonwealth to develop a schedule to the Statewide Data Agreement by 30 June 2000, and to lodge archival copies of data by 31 March 2001.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
Attach. 1	Victoria to develop and implement burning strategies that maintain or promote the ecological characteristics of Heathy Dry Forest through fire operations plans.	2004	Vital attribute and key response species data have been gathered for Heathy Dry Forest. A pilot study in the North East is trialing a strategic approach to ecological burning.
Attach. 1	Victoria to prepare Regional Vegetation Plans covering the North East which provide for the protection of endangered, vulnerable or rare EVCs on private land.	2001	Victoria's Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework and Draft Native Vegetation Plans were released for public consultation in August 2000. The consultation period is continuing.
Attach. 3	Parties to prepare Statewide Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Heritage Values in the Forests, Parks and Reserves of Victoria, based on those prepared for East Gippsland.	by 30 June 2000	Preparation of the Guidelines has been rescheduled to co-ordinate with the development of the state-wide Aboriginal Heritage Management System following extensive community consultation with indigenous groups. The Guidelines are expected to be completed by 31 March 2002.

Table 4. Milestone Implementation – West Victoria

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation Action
26	Commonwealth to use its best endeavours to introduce legislation into the Parliament to insert into the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cwth) definitions of 'Forestry Operations', 'RFA Forestry Operations' and 'RFA or Regional Forest Agreement' identical to those contained in the Regional Forest Agreements Bill (Cwth).	30 June 2000	The Commonwealth Environment Legislation Amendment (No 1) Bill 2000 was tabled in the Senate on 12 April 2000. This Bill included proposed amendments to the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> to include the definitions identical to those in the Regional Forest Agreements Bill. Debate on the Bill was adjourned on 15 August 2000. The amendments have not been agreed by the Federal Parliament.
36, 39 Attach. 1	Parties to report annually on achievement of milestones for first five years, and then as part of the 5 yearly review	Commencing 2001	This is the first annual report.
46(c) Attach. 10	Victoria to implement the Integrated Forest Planning System and the Statewide Forest Resource Inventory in the West Victoria region.	Midlands FMA by 31/12/ 2003; Otway FMA by 30/6/2005; Portland FMA by 30/6/2006.	Development of the Statewide Forest Resource Inventory in the Midlands FMA, in consultation with the community, is well advanced. The mapping and inventory components are complete in the Midlands FMA, and the mapping is complete in the Otway and Portland FMAs.
49 and 51	Victoria and the Commonwealth to develop Sustainability Indicators.	2005	A framework to develop sustainability indicators in conjunction with the Victorian State of the Forest Report has been agreed by the State and Commonwealth. Research is being conducted in Victoria to develop and test various sustainability indicators. A data collection program commenced for Montreal Process Category A indicators in all regions of the state. These data will be used to assist in the program to develop RFA indicators of sustainable forest management by RFA areas.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
56, 57, 58	Victoria and the Commonwealth to undertake and, where relevant, complete threatened species work as detailed in Attachment 2 (of the West Victoria RFA).	2005	Work is well advanced on the preparation of Action Statements and Recovery Plans for 17 species.
60	Victoria to develop programs for pest plant and animal control.	2005	Victoria is currently developing a Victorian Pest Management Strategy that will provide a framework for development of more detailed strategies or programs within each region.
64 Attach. 1	Victoria agrees to implement the agreed land tenure change.	31 December 2002	Legislation is to be prepared.
67	Victoria to produce and publish a Forest Management Plan for the Portland and Horsham FMAs.	30 June 2002	Not yet commenced.
78 Attach. 3	Parties to prepare Statewide Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Heritage Values in the Forests, Parks and Reserves of Victoria, based on those prepared for East Gippsland.	30 June 2000	Preparation of the Guidelines has been rescheduled to co-ordinate with the development of the state-wide Aboriginal Heritage Management System following extensive community consultation with indigenous groups. The Guidelines are expected to be completed by 31 March 2002.
87	Victoria to phase out harvesting firewood, posts and poles within the CAR reserve system.	2003	In progress.
92	Victoria and the Commonwealth to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a schedule to the Statewide Data agreement • lodge archival copies of data 	30 June 2000 31 March 2001	State-wide data agreement signed on 28 March 2000. Work towards finalising data schedules and lodging archival copies of data is progressing.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
Attach. 1	Victoria to prepare Regional Vegetation Plans covering the West Victoria region which provide for the protection of endangered, vulnerable or rare EVCs on private land.	2001	Victoria's Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework and Draft Native Vegetation Plans were released for public consultation in August 2000. The consultation period is continuing.

Table 5. Milestone Implementation – Gippsland

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	<u>Implementation Action</u>
26	Commonwealth to use its best endeavours to introduce legislation into the Parliament to insert into the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cwth) definitions of ‘ <i>Forestry Operations</i> ’, ‘ <i>RFA Forestry Operations</i> ’ and ‘ <i>RFA or Regional Forest Agreement</i> ’ identical to those contained in the Regional Forest Agreements Bill (Cwth).	30 June 2000	The Commonwealth Environment Legislation Amendment (No 1) Bill 2000 was tabled in the Senate on 12 April 2000. This Bill included proposed amendments to the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> to include the definitions identical to those in the Regional Forest Agreements Bill. Debate on the Bill was adjourned on 15 August 2000. The amendments have not been agreed by the Federal Parliament.
36, 39 Attach. 1	Parties to report annually on achievement of milestones for the first five years, and then as part of the 5 yearly review.	Commencing 2001	This is the first annual report.
46(c) Attach. 10	Victoria to implement the Integrated Forest Planning System and the Statewide Forest Resource Inventory in the Gippsland region.	31 December 2002	Development of the SFRI for Gippsland is in progress. The mapping and the inventory component of the SFRI is complete and the analysis component has commenced.
49 and 51	Victoria and the Commonwealth to develop Sustainability Indicators.	2005	A framework to develop sustainability indicators in conjunction with the Victorian State of the Forest Report has been agreed by the State and Commonwealth. Research is being conducted in Victoria to develop and test various sustainability indicators. A data collection program commenced for Montreal Process Category A indicators in all regions of the state. These data will be used to assist in the program to develop RFA indicators of sustainable forest management by RFA areas.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
56, 58	Victoria and the Commonwealth to undertake and, where relevant, complete threatened species work as detailed in Attachment 2 (of the Gippsland RFA).	2005	Work is well advanced on the preparation of Action Statements for 5 species.
60	Victoria to develop programs for pest plant and animal control.	2005	Victoria is currently developing a Victorian Pest Management Strategy that will provide a framework for development of more detailed strategies or programs within each region.
64 Attach. 1	Victoria agrees to implement the agreed land tenure change.	31 December 2002	Legislation to add the Wongungarra area to the Alpine National Park was passed in June 2000 and will come into effect on 1 February 2001. Legislation is to be prepared for the other changes in land tenure.
67	Victoria to produce and publish the Gippsland Forest Management Plan.	31 December 2001	Preparation of the Gippsland Proposed Forest Management Plan is well advanced.
78 Attach. 3	Parties to prepare Statewide Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Heritage Values in the Forests, Parks and Reserves of Victoria, based on those prepared for East Gippsland.	30 June 2000	Preparation of the Guidelines has been rescheduled to co-ordinate with the development of the state-wide Aboriginal Heritage Management System following extensive community consultation with indigenous groups. The Guidelines are expected to be completed by 31 March 2002.
87	Victoria to phase out harvesting of firewood, posts and poles within the CAR reserve system.	2003	In progress.
92	Victoria and the Commonwealth to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a schedule to the Statewide Data agreement; • lodge archival copies of data 	30 June 2000 31 March 2001	State-wide data agreement signed on 28 March 2000. Work towards finalising data schedules and lodging archival copies of data is progressing.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation action
Attach. 1	Victoria to prepare Regional Vegetation Plans covering the Gippsland region which provide for the protection of endangered, vulnerable or rare EVCs on private land.	2001	Victoria's Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework and Draft Native Vegetation Plans were released for public consultation in August 2000. The consultation period is continuing.