



Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change  
Minister for Suburban Development

8 Nicholson Street  
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Mr Peter Lockyer

Ref: CC0093139



Dear Mr Lockyer

## VICTORIA'S FORESTS

Thank you for your correspondence about Victoria's forests. I sincerely apologise for the delay in responding to your letter.

The Victorian Government takes the protection of our natural environment very seriously and understands that Victoria's forests are highly valued in the community. Our forests are managed for multiple benefits such as the protection of the environment, recreation and forest-based industries.

The Victorian Government has secured the Commonwealth Government's agreement to a two-year process to modernise Victoria's Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs). This agreement will give us the time we need to conduct scientific assessments of forest values and to engage with Victorians on the best and highest value use of forests for the future. This will ensure that the next generation of RFAs are a robust framework that balances environmental, economic and social forest values based on current science.

The government remains committed to the protection of rare old growth forests. This commitment is given effect through Victoria's conservation parks and reserves, which ensures all examples of rare old growth forests, and a minimum of 60 per cent of non-rare old growth forests are protected. In addition, on 27 March 2018, we announced initiatives around immediate protection for 2,500 hectares of high environmental value forest in the Kuark Forest of East Gippsland. About half of this area is old growth forest and provides essential habitat for threatened species, including the Greater Glider. Additionally, we have announced immediate protection for all large trees greater than 2.5 metres in diameter across Victoria. To safeguard our native wildlife, a program of threatened species surveys will be introduced, to improve the management and protection of threatened species in timber harvesting coupes.

More broadly, all timber harvesting operations in state forest must be undertaken in accordance with the regulatory framework. Key to this is the *Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014*, a legislative instrument that contains specific rules that protect threatened species and other forest values.

We recognise that the diversity of our animals and plants is part of Victoria's identity. It boosts tourism and our economy, and is critical to a healthy, vibrant and livable Victoria. The biodiversity strategy, *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037*, is a long-term plan for stopping the decline of Victoria's biodiversity and improving our natural environment. You can access Victoria's biodiversity strategy at: <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan>.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lily D'Ambrosio', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP**  
**Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change**  
**Minister for Suburban Development**

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