

Health benefits of intact forests – It is time to end native forest logging and declare the Great Forest National Park

Victoria's native forests provide a broad range of critical services that help us to survive and thrive. When forests are degraded or lost, the essentials for life are compromised – our water resources, the air we breathe and the stability of our weather and climate. We also lose the vital contributions our forests make to our physical and psychological health and wellbeing.

OUR FORESTS ARE WORTH MORE STANDING

The Mountain Ash forests in Victoria's Central Highlands

- Are critical for carbon storage
- Ensure a world class pure water supply for millions of Victorians
- Improve air quality by releasing oxygen into the atmosphere and drawing down carbon dioxide and pollutants
- Provide green space for Victorians to enjoy, thereby supporting physical, mental and spiritual health
- Are a potential source of thousands of jobs in education, research, and ecotourism
- Support an incredible diversity of species and ecosystems, including many that are rare and threatened

NEGATIVE HEALTH IMPACTS OF NATIVE FOREST LOGGING

- Loss of carbon storage
- Increased bushfire risk, which persists for decades after the logging event
- Threatened water supplies to Melbourne and rural communities
- Loss of biodiversity
- Impact on First Nations people's wellbeing and connection to Country

HEALTH BENEFITS OF A GREAT FOREST NATIONAL PARK

The proposed Great Forest National Park would connect existing protected areas in Victoria's Central Highlands and add 355,000 hectares of new protected forests. The flow-on benefits to health and well-being of Victorians would be enormous.

- Climate change mitigation
- Enhanced water security
- Increased access to nature
- Economic return
- Biodiversity preservation
- Increased agricultural productivity

As a result of these benefits, DEAs calls for the following:

- **Urgent actions to bring forward the 2030 exit from native forest logging, including immediate roll-out of measures to support workers and the forestry industry.**
- **Full consultation and shared decision making with Traditional Owners.**
- **Declaration of the Great Forest National Park by the State Government in this term of office.**

DEA's full statement including references can be viewed [here](#)