

VICTORIAN REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT

ANNUAL REPORT 1998

This report fulfils the obligations under clauses 25 and 35 of the East Gippsland and Central Highlands Regional Forest Agreements respectively, 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 and 4 respectively of the two Agreements and are outlined in Tables 1 and 2 of this report.

In view of the fact that several of the milestone timelines in the East Gippsland RFA were amended in the Central Highlands RFA, the parties agreed to delay the development of the first annual report until the second year to enable simultaneous reporting on milestones in both RFAs.

Only those milestones that are due for completion by the end of 1998 are reported on in detail. Significant action on other milestones is also provided. Milestones that were amended by the Central Highlands RFA are reported under that RFA in table 2 below.

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 Controls Act 1982</i> .	June 1997	Completed in April 1997.
38	Victoria and the Commonwealth to assess the outcomes of the Montreal Process Implementation Group (MIG) process.	December 1997	Completed in December 1997 and provided the basis for further work in developing regional sustainability indicators.
45	Victoria and the Commonwealth to undertake and where relevant complete threatened species work as detailed in Attachment 4.	2002	Work is well advanced on the preparation of Action Statements and Recovery Plans for several species. Action Statements have been completed for the Powerful Owl and <i>Dipodium hamiltonianum</i>.
49	Victoria to implement agreed tenure changes to establish the CAR Reserve System.	February 1998	Completed, but due to delays unrelated to the RFA process, the tenure changes were not formalised until November 1998.
51	Victoria to publish an amendment to the East Gippsland Forest Management Area Plan.	June 1997	Completed in June 1997.
56	Commonwealth to seek to remove export controls for timber sourced from all Victorian plantations.	March 1997	Completed in March 1997.

Table 2. Milestone Implementation - Central Highlands

44	Victoria to implement an ongoing Quality Assurance Program.	2000	The Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) has established an Audit and Risk Management Branch which includes people external to NRE to provide advice to businesses within the Department on quality assurance matters and performance evaluation. The first audit undertaken by this branch involved the appointment of an external consultant to review the Code of Forest Practices Audit process. The review found the process to be adequate, but recommended some improvements, particularly in relation to documentation procedures. Most of these recommendations were accepted by the audit branch and will be implemented by the Forests Service by the end of 1999. Investigation has commenced on formalisation of an EMS framework for State forests.
45	Victoria to complete and publish regional prescriptions for timber production.	December 1998	All Forest Management and Forest Operator prescriptions for each forest management area in Victoria were finalised by the end of 1998.
45	Victoria to use its best endeavours to complete and publish management plans for all National and State Parks.	December 1998	All but two park plans were completed by the end of 1998, representing some 99% of the park area now covered by plans. The remaining two plans will be completed in early 1999.
45	Victoria to implement the Integrated Forest Planning System and the Statewide Forest Resource Inventory for East Gippsland and the Central Highlands.	2001	Work is progressing towards achieving this milestone.
50	Victoria and the Commonwealth to develop sustainability indicators.	2002	A list of regional indicators has been developed and agreed, along with priorities for collection of data relevant to the indicators. Some indicators can be implemented immediately, others will require further research to establish the kinds of data to be collected, while the remainder require substantial development before they can be implemented.

57	Victoria and the Commonwealth to undertake and where relevant complete threatened species work as detailed in Attachment 2.	2002	Work is well advanced on the preparation of Action Statements for several species.
59	Victoria to develop programs for pest plant and pest animal control.	2003	In line with the National Weeds strategy, Victoria has developed a Statewide Weed Strategy which will guide the development of more detailed regional strategies.
65	Victoria to publish a Central Highlands Forest Management Plan.	30 June 1998	Completed.
82	Victoria to complete a review in accordance with the Competition Principles Agreement.	1999	Work on this milestone is well underway and is on schedule for completion in 1999.
81	Victoria will report on progress toward development of a long term timber harvesting and water production strategy for the Thomson Reservoir catchment.	2002	Work is underway to provide enhanced data to achieve this milestone.
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).	September 1998	Completion of this milestone is awaiting the finalisation of the Statewide Data Agreement between the Commonwealth and Victoria. It was originally envisaged that individual data agreements would be developed for each RFA region. However, the Commonwealth and the State have now agreed that they will jointly develop a Statewide data agreement and simply add schedules detailing the data relevant to a particular RFA region. The Statewide agreement is still being finalised .
Attach.1	Victoria to assess endangered, vulnerable and rare Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) on Melbourne Water Corporation lands (in the Central Highlands).	2002	Work has not commenced on this task.
Attach.1	Victoria to prepare Regional Vegetation Plans covering the Central Highlands which provide for the protection of endangered, vulnerable and rare EVCs on private land.	2001	Work is in progress to complete this milestone by the due date.
Attach.1	Victoria to publish a Technical report on Rainforest.	1998	Completed in December 1998.
Attach.3 cl. 5	Victoria and the Commonwealth to prepare Statewide Cultural Heritage Guidelines.	December 1999	Work is in progress to complete this milestone by the due date.