

8. CHAPTER EIGHT:

STAKEHOLDER ISSUES

This section of this report looks at what communities and stakeholders have to say about the future of our State forests and what they consider to be the most important issues to consider in the creation of the RFA. Firstly this section looks at the issues of concern for each of the stakeholder groups. The issues raised range from the future management of State forests to job losses and community decline. The second part of this section looks at the issues of concern for communities which are sensitive to changes in forest use and management. Data relating to the case study towns were also derived from Local Government planning documents which contained valuable information as to the key issues for the local community as well as providing insight into the visions for the future of the community.

8.1 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The key stakeholder groups in the Regional Forest Agreement are:

- timber industry and employees
- conservationists
- Aboriginal communities
- Local Governments
- apiarists
- forest graziers
- farm foresters
- forest based tourism operators
- recreation interests
- mining industry
- forest flora collectors
- forest dependent communities.

For ease of reference, their issues of concern have been grouped into the following categories:

- conservation
- employment
- economic
- community vitality
- land tenure
- timber supply
- cultural heritage
- consultation
- access to forests
- forest management

Not all of the stakeholder groups have interests which can be easily categorised into all of these areas. Therefore only those categories which relate to the concerns of each of the stakeholder groups have been included in the illustrative diagrams which follow.

8.1.1 Methods

The methods used to collect information for this chapter included surveys of:

- hardwood mills and their employees
- hardwood logging contractors and their employees
- forest graziers and bee keepers and their employees
- Local Governments in the region
- and farm foresters.

The surveys included ‘open ended’ questions which encouraged general comments and qualitative statements from respondents. This qualitative data has been analysed and a summary of the results is an input to this section. In addition to discussion with stakeholder peak organisations on the SEQ RFA Reference Panel, several community meetings were held and focus groups conducted involving individuals and different stakeholder groups. A forum of the SEQ regions’ member Councils of the Local Government Association of Queensland was also held as part of the issue scoping process. Additional data was also collected through interviews.

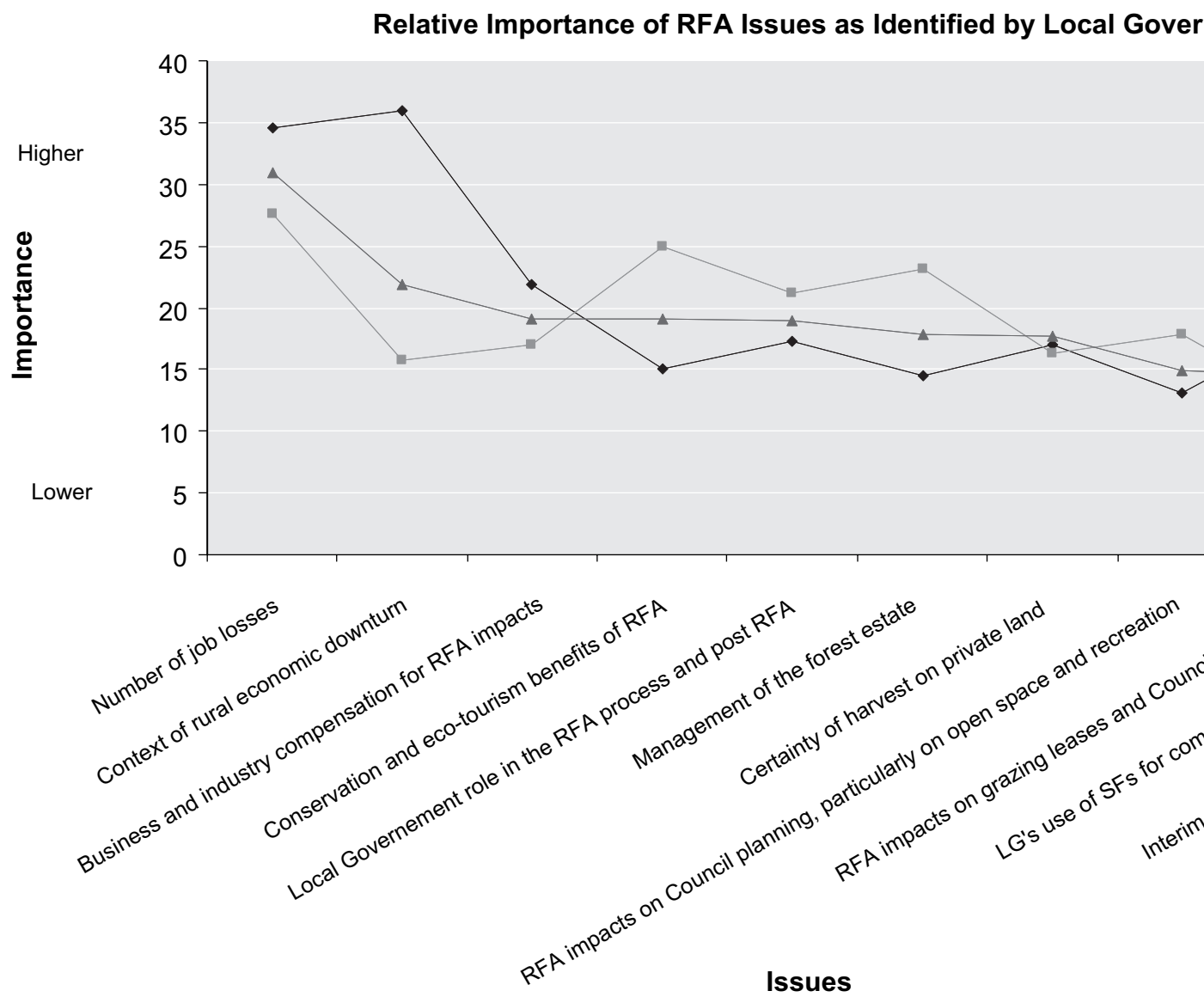


FIGURE 8.1 RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF RFA ISSUES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

8.1.2 Local Government Issues

Local Governments in the SEQ RFA region are concerned about their role in the RFA process and the responsibilities which they may have in dealing with the RFA's effects.

As part of the process of consultation for the CRA, a forum of the Local Government Association of Queensland was conducted. At this forum, several key issues previously identified for Local Governments were presented and further developed. They were:

- Local Government's use of State forests for community infrastructure works like dams and water treatment plants
- business and industry compensation for RFA impacts
- the context of the rural economic downturn
- RFA impacts on Council planning, particularly on open space and recreation
- no job losses as a result of the RFA
- conservation and eco-tourism benefits of the RFA
- RFA impacts on grazing leases and Council's rate base
- management of the Forest Estate
- Interim Forest Management Arrangements
- the role of Local Government in the RFA process and post-RFA
- the certainty of harvest on private land

In a survey of the Local Governments, which was conducted after the forum, Local Governments were asked to prioritise these issues. Of the 41 surveys sent out, 23 were returned. Of those returned, 13 were from shires which are inland with the remaining 10 being from shires which border the coast. Making a distinction between these two kinds of shires was found to be useful for understanding the differences in their responses. In the figure which follows, the relative importance of these issues has been graphed to show the responses of the Local Governments from the region as a whole, as well as responses from eastern local governments (those which border the coast) and western Local Governments (those which do not border the coast).

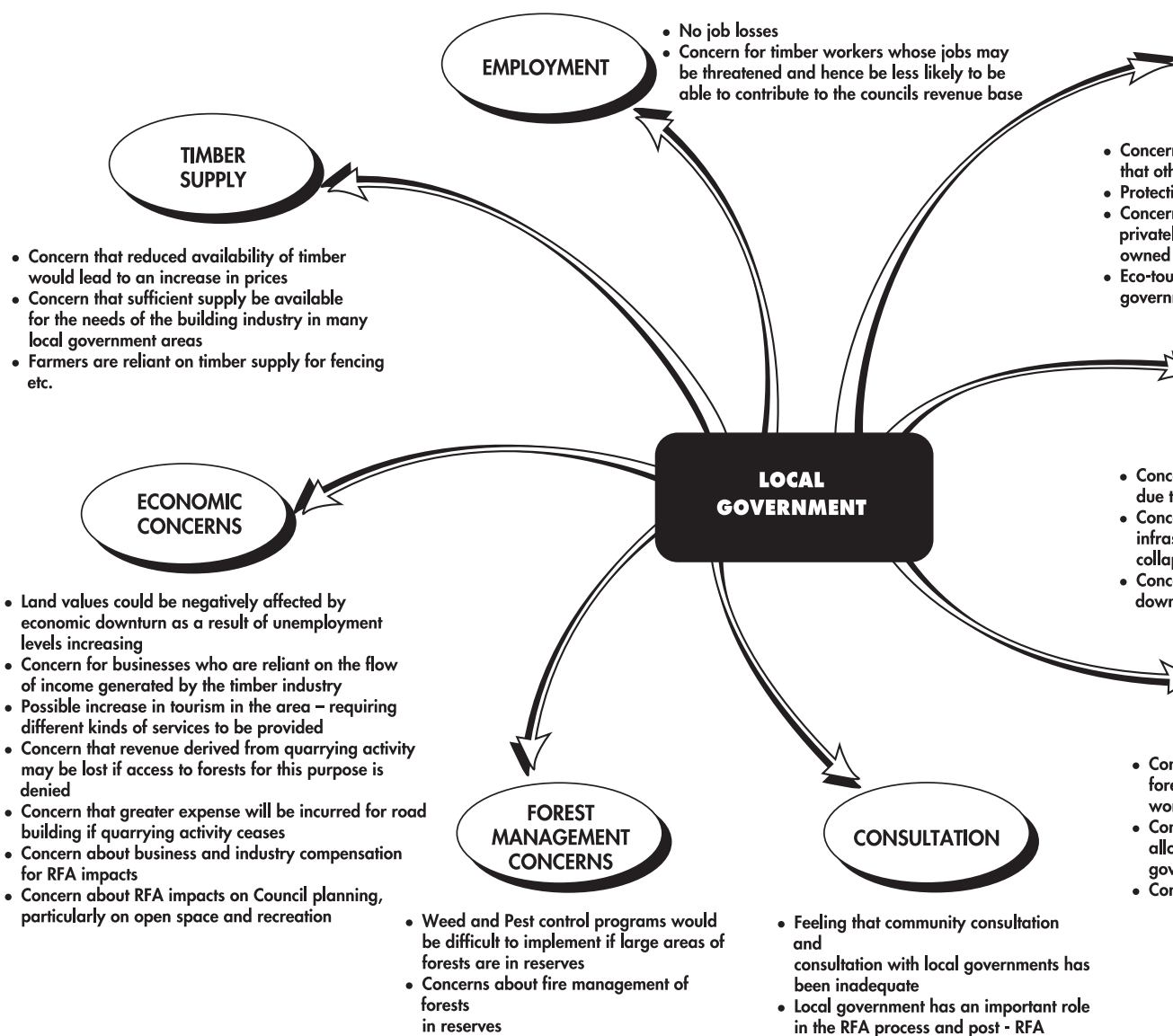


FIGURE 8.2 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

8.1.3 Timber Industry and Employees' Issues

The key concerns for the people involved in the timber industry centre around the possible effects that the decisions made as a result of the RFA have on the continued viability of their industry.

Due to the uncertainty within the industry at present, the people who manage timber operations are reluctant to commit to substantial investments in their industry. Work conditions, job security and wages for employees, in such a context, are unlikely to improve.

Timber industry employees are also seriously concerned that the RFA may cause them to lose their jobs through decreasing the available supply of the native Crown hardwood resource. If this were to happen, employees are concerned that finding alternative employment would be very difficult, especially given the context of rural decline and their highly specific job skills.

People involved in the timber industry are worried by the possible negative impacts that the RFA may have on their towns, to which many have long associations. They are concerned that their towns may suffer decline in population, and hence lose services.

Many people involved in the timber industry are also concerned that forests need to be well managed and that the cessation of logging would not necessarily equate to good forest management.



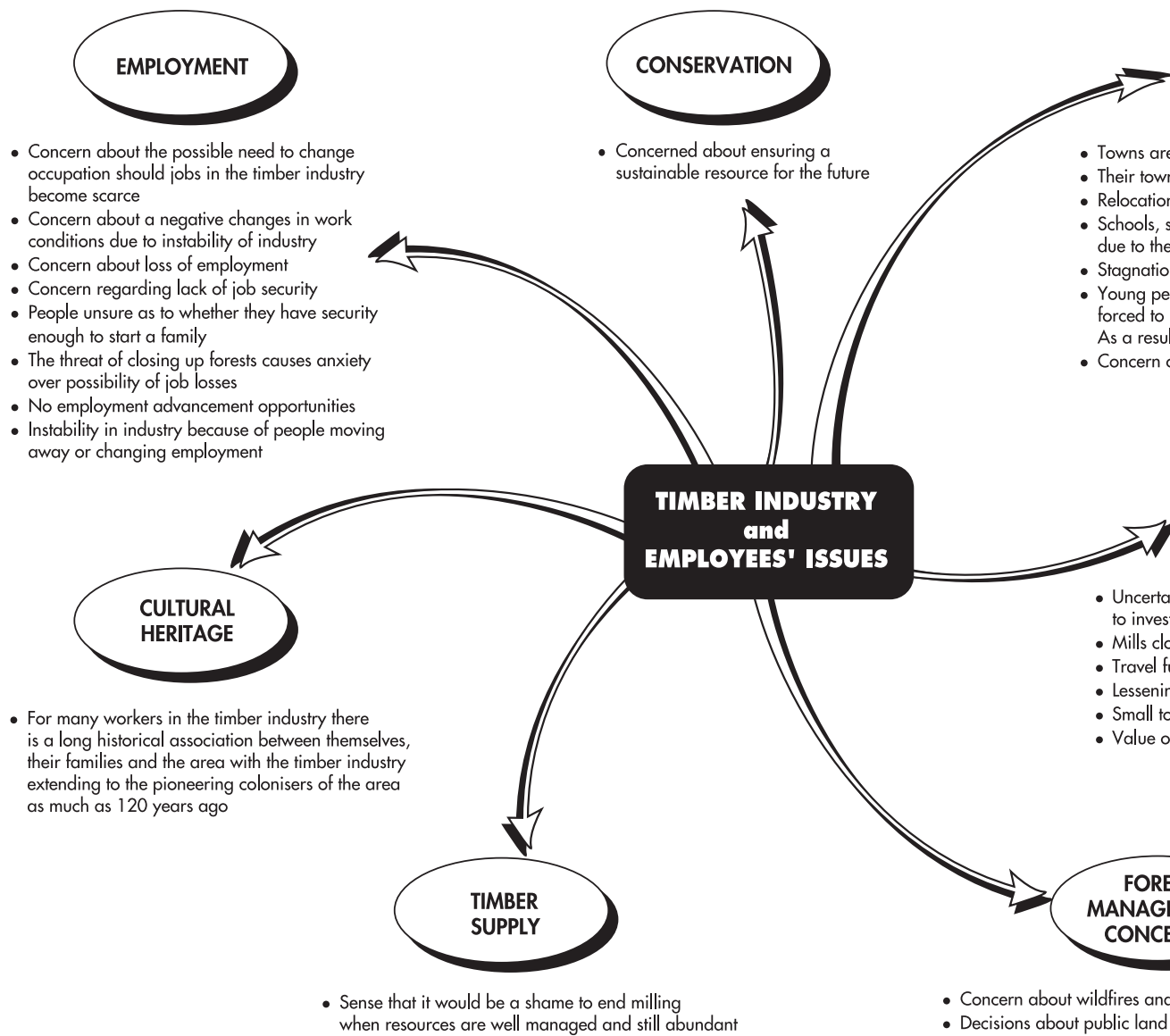
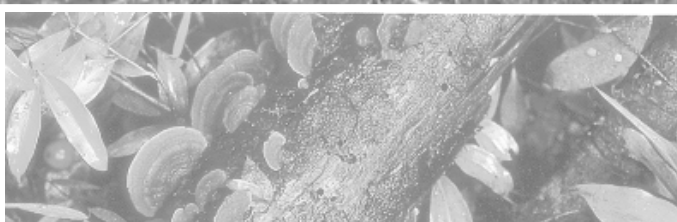


FIGURE 8.3 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR THE TIMBER INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYEES

8.1.4 Conservationists' Issues

Conservationists are concerned that the forests of the SEQ RFA region need to be protected in order to preserve biodiversity and to counter the green house effect. They are concerned that the rate of logging in the region is known to be unsustainable in providing timber resources and that logging at such a rate threatens forest and aquatic flora and fauna species.

Some conservationists feel that plantations would offer a viable alternative for providing timber resources as well as providing employment. They also feel that protecting the forests of the region would increase the potential for forest based tourism.



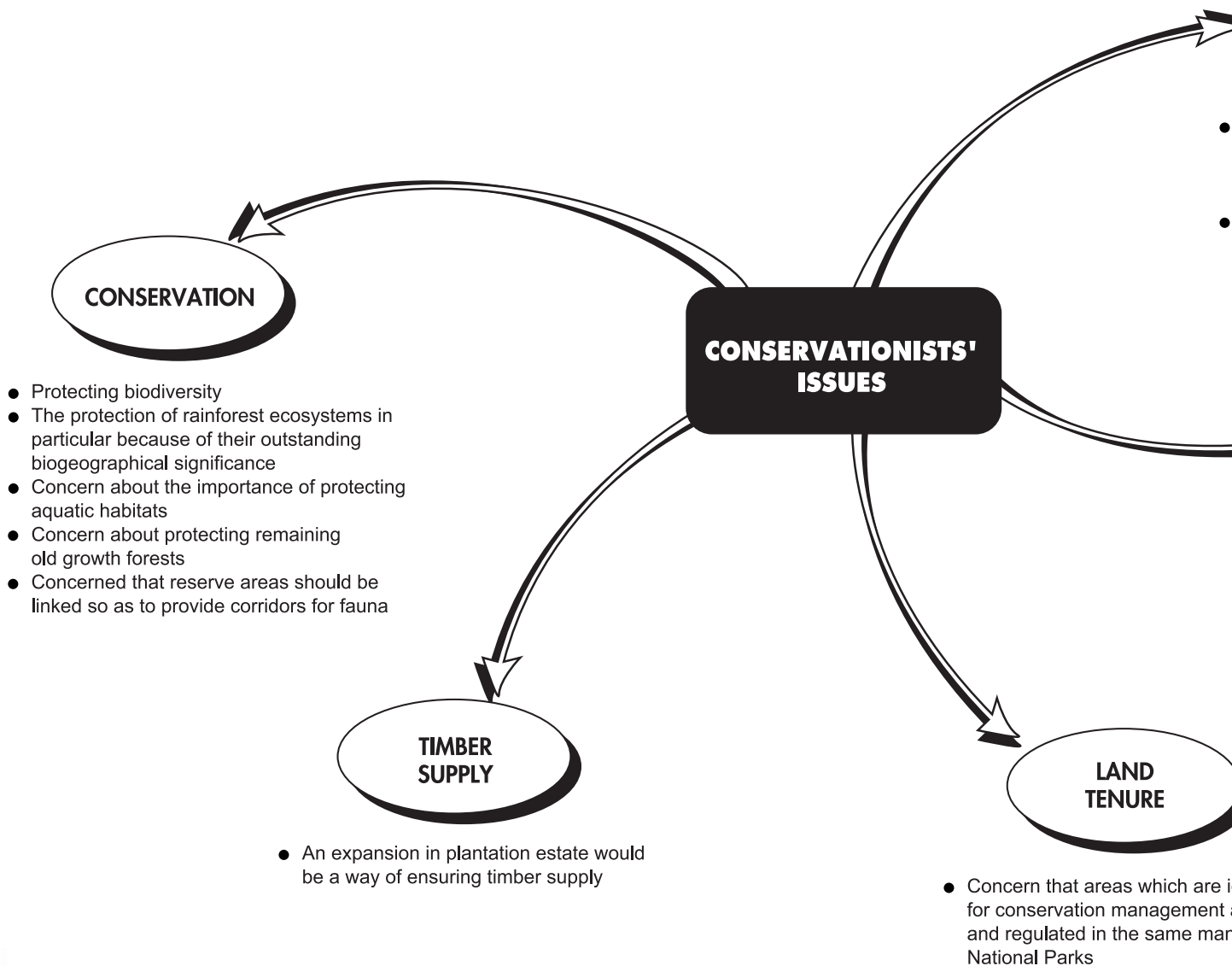


FIGURE 8.4 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR CONSERVATIONISTS

8.1.5 Aboriginal Interests

Aboriginal social assessment projects *SE5.1.2 Literature Review of the Impacts of Changes in Forest Use on Indigenous Communities*, and *SE5.2.2 Indigenous Communities' Issues and Social Profile Case Study*, are still being undertaken at the time of compiling this social assessment overview report.

Preliminary key issues for Aboriginal communities in the SEQ RFA region were that the RFA ought to allow access to forests for traditional purposes. There is also concern about the RFA's effects on Native Title rights and interests.

Of high importance to Aboriginal communities is that sites and landscapes of cultural heritage importance are protected. Aboriginal communities are concerned that they are able to maintain healthy and productive forests which are well managed.

Aboriginal communities are also concerned that the RFA should consider the possibility for employment in forest based industries and economic development for the communities.

- Concern that forests be managed to protect their conservation values as identified by traditional owners
- Concern that “conservation” of forests does not include prohibited access for Aboriginal people or interfere or diminish Aboriginal people’s ability to exercise their Native Title rights and interests

CONSERVATION

ACCESS TO FORESTS

- That traditional owners access to forests for exercising their native title rights be maintained
- Concern that there be continued access to state forests for the traditional owners in order that cultural rights and responsibilities continue to be carried out

CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Concern that sites and areas of cultural heritage significance be properly managed as deemed appropriate by traditional owners
- That cultural heritage considerations be part of the sustainable management of forests into the future and that traditional owners have the responsibility for the management of cultural heritage as part of the ESFM

CONSULTATION

- The SEQ RFA has not properly consulted traditional owners on the many interests they have in the forests of the region

FOREST MANAGEMENT

- That Aboriginal groups be partners in the management of the public forest estate

ABORIGINAL INTERESTS

FIGURE 8.5 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

8.1.6 Apiary Issues

Apiarists are concerned that they are able to maintain access to SEQ forests for bee keeping activities. Some apiarists in the region are heavily reliant on the flora resources of current State forests for the viability of their businesses.

They are concerned that forests need to be well managed to maintain flora resources and are worried that plantation forest cannot supply the same diversity and abundance of floral resources as native forests.

Many apiarists have to travel long distances to State forests where bee keeping activities are permitted and there is concern that even more travel will be required if the outcome of the RFA were to reduce the number of forests to which apiarists have access.



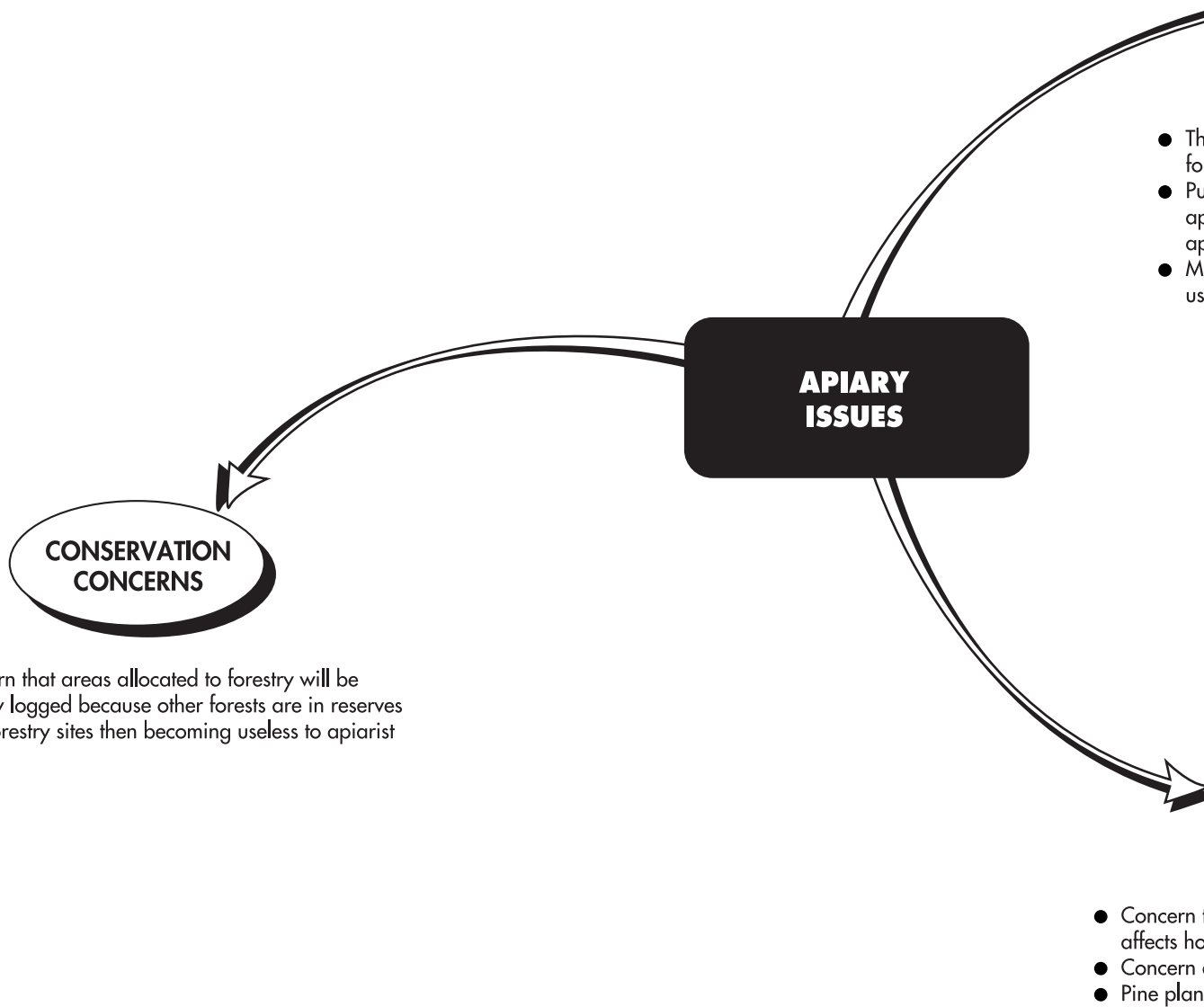


FIGURE 8.6 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR APIARISTS

8.1.7 Graziers' Issues

A key concern for forest graziers is access to grazing leases on State forest lands. Forest graziers are concerned that the RFA will move to protect current State Forests for conservation values and, as a result, may not allow the grazing of cattle on State forest lands.

Many forest graziers are concerned that roads which are presently maintained for logging purposes and facilitate graziers' access to State forests would not be maintained if logging were to cease.

Graziers are concerned that it be recognised that there is a need to manage all forests, state and private, in terms of catchment areas.



- Cattle in some cases graze on State Forest land. If forests become National Parks, graziers will not be able to use the land for this function.
- Concern that a stop to logging in State forests will mean that roads which were maintained for logging will no longer be maintained consequently reducing access to areas of state forest.

- Many graziers have leases on areas of State Forest. There is anxiety over the uncertainty of continuation of leases from the state if the RFA commits more land to reservation status.

- Graziers would like to be able to burn forestry land when burnt in order to make their burn more effective.
- There is a need for effective management of all forests. Forest management can be seen in terms of catchment area.

FIGURE 8.7 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR FOREST GRAZERS

8.1.8 Farm Foresters' Issues

A key issue of concern for farm foresters is the lack of a guaranteed right of harvest for their timber crop. Because farm forestry requires a significant initial investment and receives little to no return until trees are harvested, which may be up to 30 years later, farmers are concerned that the economic viability of planting trees is limited.

Farm foresters see their industry as one which is environmentally sound and sustainable and which may offer a viable option for the future of the timber industry in the region. However, they are concerned that there needs to be an assured return for their investment in which the RFA may have an important role to play. Farm foresters are anxious to have their concerns voiced and heard in the RFA process.

A summary of the issues raised in the Farm Forestry Survey is attached as an appendix.



- Investment in farm forestry requires a view to long-term returns because of the time it takes for trees to grow.
- The lack of satisfactory return from sale of trees because of the DPI monopoly over the market.
- The sense that the industry of farm forestry is vulnerable to external forces including, lobbying from green activists preventing them from harvesting, the possibility that the crop could be destroyed by fire and the lack of assured right of harvest
- Under the current DPI joint venture agreement, land rental payment is not paid to owner until the timber is finally harvested 30 years later. This is not encouraging for potential timber growers who may need some immediate financial return.
- DPI monopoly on timber prices does not allow farm foresters to compete in a free market.
- Eco-tourism projects are a possible offshoot of farm forestry projects.
- Possibility for the sale of trees at advanced stages to landscapers.

ECONOMIC

FARM FORESTERS' ISSUES

CONSULTATION

- Farm forestry
This can be
- Planting
- Planting
- Contribu
- Protectin
- Gaia, or
- Planting
shade a
- While there
it is distinct
primarily

- A feeling of lack of inclusion in the process of developing the RFA
- A feeling that the farm forestry survey was a surface attempt at consultation
- A feeling that the agreement is being developed
- Frustration and disillusionment that input does not matter
- Despite participation in surveys, meetings and the issues raised have not been resolved.

FIGURE 8.8 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR FARM FORESTERS

8.1.9 Tourism and Recreation Issues

Tourism operators and recreationalists who use State forests are concerned that they are able to access State forests in the region. Tourism operators are particularly concerned that the quality of the region's forests needs to be protected and that facilities for tourists would need to be upgraded if tourism in the region is to expand.

Access to State forests is important to many recreationalists for horse riding, four wheel driving, climbing and bike riding. Such access for active forms of recreation is presently unavailable in National Parks. There is concern that if State forests were to become conservation reserves, access for active recreational purposes would be denied.



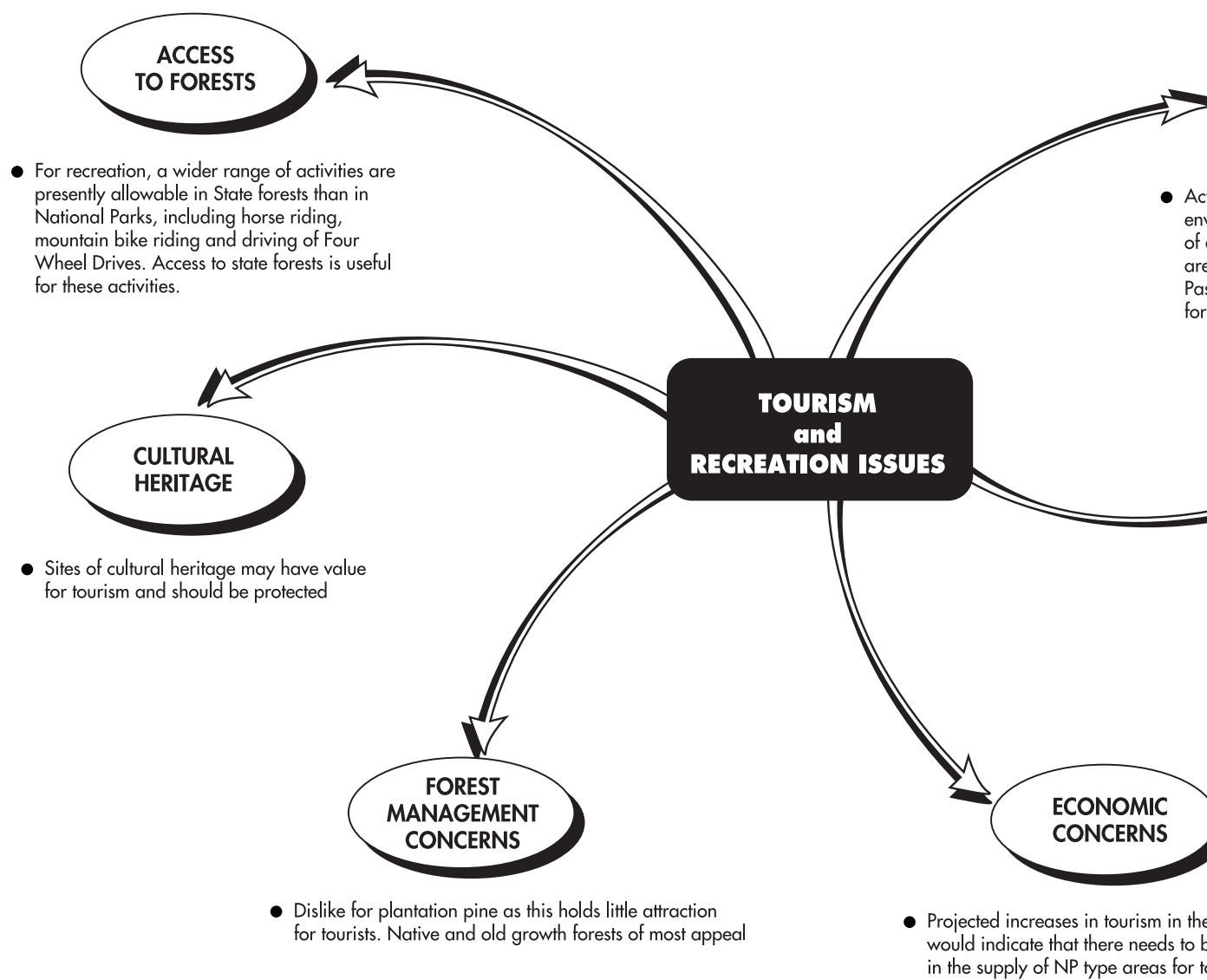


FIGURE 8.9 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR FOREST BASED TOURISM OPERATIONS AND RECREATION INTERESTS

8.1.10 Mining Interests' Issues

The primary concern for mining interests is that they maintain access to the forests in the region for mineral exploration and mining. They are also concerned with maintaining economically viable mines whilst respecting the conservation and cultural values of any given area.

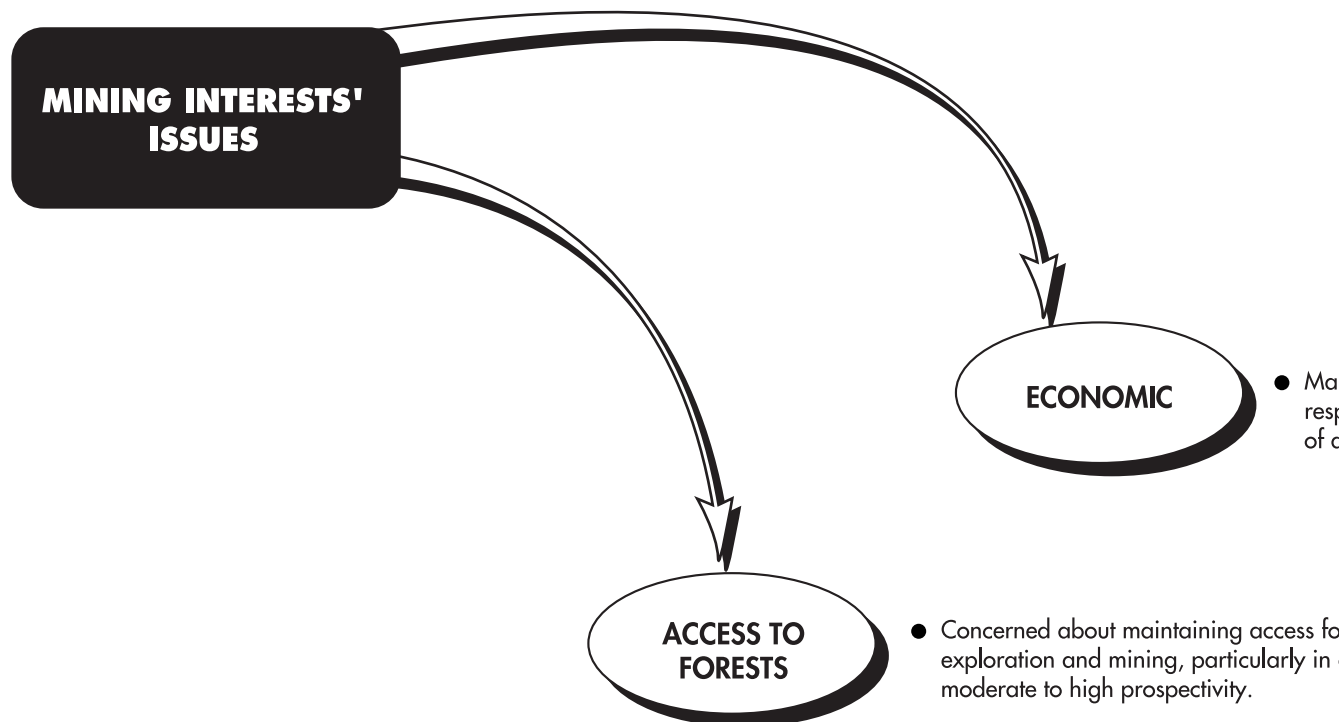


FIGURE 8.10 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR THE MINING INDUSTRY

8.1.11 Flora Collectors' Issues

Flora collectors are concerned about maintaining access to forest foliage resources in State forests on which they rely for their employment.

Uncertainty about the outcomes of the RFA has created apprehension and reluctance to expand the industry, inhibiting the industry's economic growth. Flora collectors are reliant on environmentally sustainable collection methods for the long-term viability of their industry. As such, forest management is of key concern to these operators. Flora collectors help to maintain roads through the forests they use and these roads are critical for dealing with bush fires as well as for access for other forest users.

Flora collectors are anxious to have their concerns considered as part of the CRA process.



- They operate to a strict Code of Practice which was developed by the industry and has been accredited by the Commonwealth and State environmental agencies
- Environmental sustainability is intrinsically linked to commercial sustainability
- Conservation reserves may not protect the values they are designed to protect as there has been less resources for the management of National Parks in the past and National Parks tenure may not protect environmental values

CONSERVATION

ACCESS TO FORESTS

- Concern about continued ability to access state forests for resource security and business certainty
- These operators often maintain roads in State Forests which are available to other users, these will not be maintained by their industry if no access to flora

ECONOMIC

- Major investment decisions currently being deferred because of uncertainty of the RFA
- These operators are employment generators which has multiplier effects for many Sunshine Coast and other communities through wages, business expenditure
- Low turn over of staff and growing staff numbers
- Compensation in the RFA appears to only be for the timber industry and their employees and not other commercial forest users and their employees

COMMUNITY VITALITY

- As a major and growing employer, contribute to the vitality and viability of many Sunshine Coast and other communities

LAND TENURE

- Concern that changes in tenure will impact upon their access to foliage

FLORA COLLECTORS

FIGURE 8.11 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR FOREST FLORA COLECTOR

8.1.12 Forest Dependent Communities

Forest dependent communities are concerned about the way in which their social and physical environment may be affected by the RFA. These communities are concerned about the possible effects of job losses which may result from an RFA decision to reduce access to forest resources. They are concerned that their towns retain their population and services and community vitality.

Forest dependent communities are also concerned about protecting the forests which are important to the place for aesthetic, employment and cultural reasons. Communities are concerned that their local forests should be well managed to maximise the benefits for both conservation and industry.



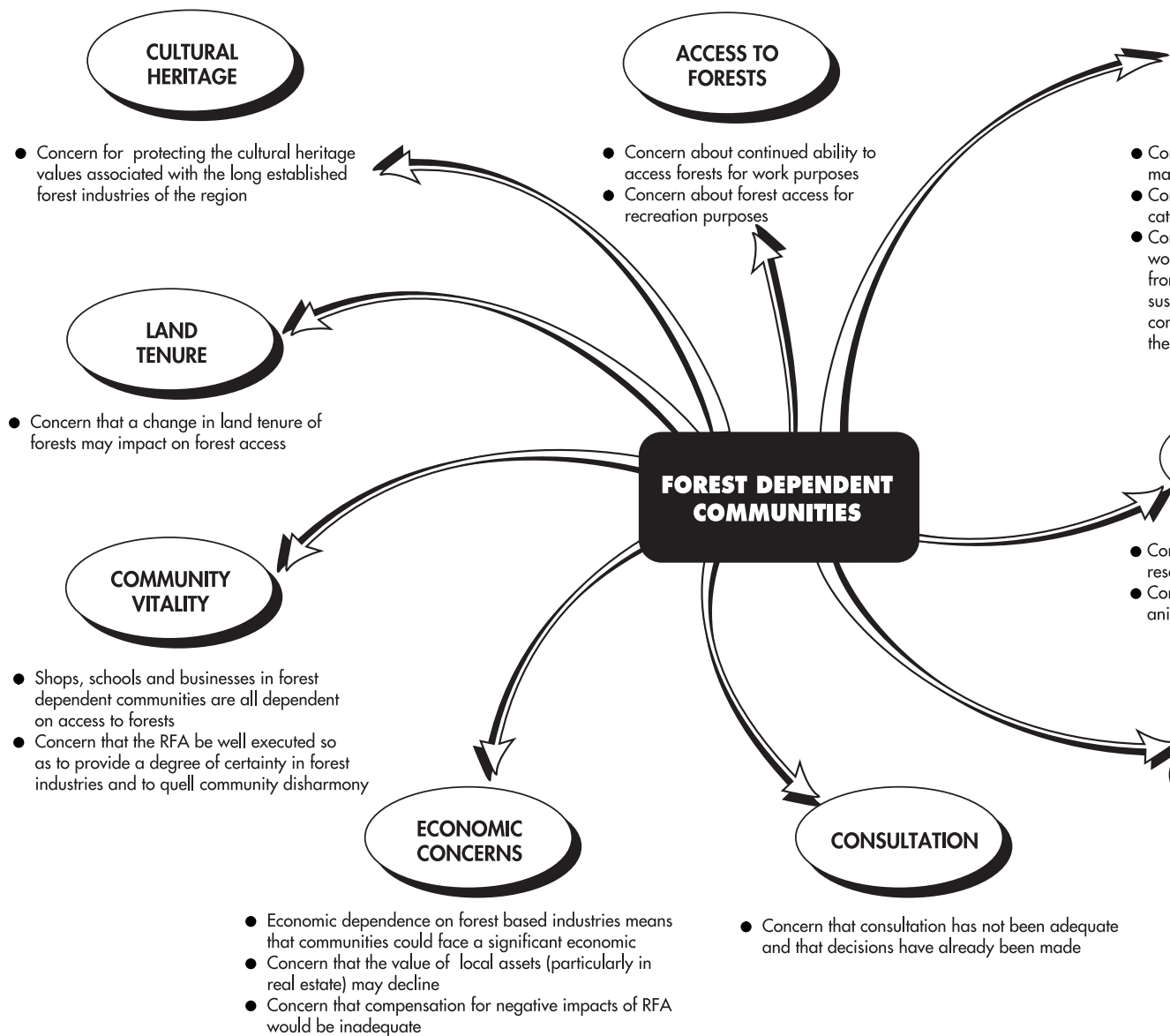


FIGURE 8.12 RFA ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR FOREST DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

