

# 6. Issues Raised During Public Consultations - *Addendum*

## INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Many issues relating to heritage, forest management, social issues and other RFA concerns were raised at the meetings and workshops. Key points from the issues are summarised as follows:

- One group consulted stated that Aboriginal people should have been represented on the RFA Steering Committee as misrepresentation of issues can occur by liaising at different levels.
- A concern was raised about the RFA setting a process in place for 20 years that may pre-empt other forest management possibilities that may arise in the future from Land Rights and Local Agreements
- There is a need for on-going communication and involvement after West RFA is signed.
- Consultation for the broader RFA process is insufficient and the result will not be an agreed process.
- There is concern about the RFA agreement and what it says about Aboriginal heritage, that Aboriginal interests are not protected at the higher level of the process, and there is not proper protection of Aboriginal rights in the process.
- The RFA needs to be more active in securing ongoing resources to protect Aboriginal heritage values. The progress of such funds needs to be conveyed to the community.
- Aboriginal people do not want their issues limited to heritage. They are concerned about broader issues such as land management and development and the continued alienation of public lands that are enjoyed by the wider community.
- Some groups noted they had no faith in the sustainable management figures.
- There should be on-going consultation with all stakeholders involved in the forests.
- In recognition of traditional ownership and the disadvantages communities have regarding communication specific invitations to attend public meetings, should be sent out to Aboriginal community groups.
- Gournditch-Mara Native Title Claimants noted a need to be resourced, for the establishment of a heritage unit in Portland.
- The Winda-Mara Aboriginal people stated: That there has already been too much destruction of forests in the region (south west Victoria) and Aboriginal people want no more logging at all in the area.
- There should be more direct dialogue with Aboriginal communities and greater participation in the development of forest management plans.
- A longer time frame to respond to issues is needed, especially with new Aboriginal committees being formed.
- Need for increased employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in forest management roles in all level of Government within NRE, Parks and AAV to ensure their issues are addressed.

- A percentage of the royalties received from forestry should be put into heritage management.
- The Aboriginal people need co-management of forest areas.
- What compensation is there for damage to landscapes as Aboriginal heritage is not just a matter of buffering and protecting known sites?
- People want rights of access to forests and are concerned about the Victorian legislation that excludes them from forests and logging areas.
- An ombudsman should conduct the five yearly review as a self-assessment by the management organisation would not be satisfactory.
- Need to understand that Aboriginal groups do not want to have some areas of Aboriginal cultural significance identified or listed on maps.
- Some groups want further survey studies to learn where places of importance are.
- There is a need for broad based cultural heritage education.
- While there is legislation to protect Aboriginal Heritage, there appears to be inadequate resources to apply the legislation.
- Desire greater recognition of need for Aboriginal communities to have access to the forests for traditional/cultural purposes.
- People working in forests should be made aware of the legislation.
- Aboriginal people are concerned about the loss of their forest heritage. There is little forest left and Aboriginal culture runs against the philosophy of clear-felling and logging for economic gain.