

Media Update

FORESTRY FACTS v. Throw-away lines

1. **The Australian: Stuart Rintoul article – Truck-huggers remind Brown of his rise from the wilderness (Nov 4-5):** *“The protesters, who said Melbourne was losing 20 billion litres of water a year because of logging in the Thomson catchment area...”*

The Fact:

Melbourne uses about **480,000ML a year**, of which 288,000ML is used by residences. The water is drawn from the Yarra (71%), Thomson (27%) and Goulbourn (2%) river basins. Only **17,000ML per year** is forecast to be lost to the growth of young trees; of which this peak is reached only **after 20 years** of regrowth (2026). In other words, **17 billion litres a year is lost at a peak after 20 years.**

2. **ABC Stateline Josephine Cafagna: Bracks v. Baillieu debate:** Logging in the catchment substantially reduces water flows.

The Fact:

Only 150 ha (0.3%) of the Thomson catchment area (approx. 50,000 ha in size), is harvested for trees and regenerated on average each year. These areas are left to grow for another 80-100 years. The Thomson was devastated by bush fire in 1939 and the bulk of its forest is ash timber, now 67 years old. Only 17,000ML per year is forecast to be lost to the growth of young trees; of which this peak is only reached after 20 years of regrowth (2026). In other words, 17 billion litres a year is lost at a peak after 20 years. Melbourne uses 480 billion litres of water per year.

The saving of 17,000 megalitres of water in 20 years represents about 3% of Melbourne’s current annual water usage. Scientific evidence shows that well managed harvesting need not undermine water quantity and quality in our catchments.¹

Other Facts:

1. Only 10% of the State’s 7.9 million hectares of forest can be harvest. Only 0.14% of the total forest area is affected by harvesting in any one year (9000 hectares of 7.9 million hectares)
2. Only 13% of native forest in Victoria’s catchment area of 157,000 hectares is available for logging and only 0.18% is harvested each year.

¹ Department of Sustainability and Environment: Producing Timber and Water for Melbourne

2. Media Update cont....

3. Only 0.3 % (150 ha) of native forest in the Thomson catchment area of 50,000 ha is available for logging on average each year.
 4. Only 0.4% (60 to 70 ha) of the total area of native forest in the Yarra Tributaries of approx. 15,000 ha is planned to be harvested on average each year.
 5. Close to 70% of Victoria's 6,569,000 hectares of public native forest is in reserve.
 6. The timber industry has lost more than 50% of its resource in the last 30 years, as areas of the forest have been placed in parks and reserves, and as the controls on harvesting become more stringent. Since the last State election the resource has been reduced by 31 per cent.
 7. The timber industry has 567,800 cubic metres of D+ sawlogs per year available to it under the Victorian Government's Our Forests, Our Future (OFOF) plan.
- VAFI supports proper scientific review of all forestry areas that will deliver positive sustainable outcomes that are demonstrably better for Victorians. It does not support 'seat of the pants trade-offs in the heat of an election battle.

For further information:

Ms Tricia Caswell
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Forest Industries Association
Tel (03) 96119000. Mobile: 0409 517 189

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