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BE A VOICE FOR THE FORESTS

## Some background information to help you respond.

The next 10-year Forest Management Plan for the South West forests is being written, and the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), the body responsible for preparing the plan, has released an important survey.

The survey is the first stage in the public consultation process for the next 10-year Forest Management Plan (FMP). It gives us all an opportunity to guide the development of the plan. This is critically important. The State Government's commitment to end native forest logging was a massive breakthrough, but the work is not over yet.

We must ensure that our views are heard loud and clear and that the next Forest Management Plan is a world-class Forest Conservation Plan – and nothing less!

### **What do you value most about the forests? What do you want to see done to protect them?**

Please fill in the survey for the forests today – there's never been a more important time to speak for the trees.

Most of the questions are quite self-explanatory, so we haven't set out a step-by-step guide this time. However, many of the questions relate to forests' instrumental value for human use. Keep this in mind and find ways to highlight the forests own values not related to human beings, such as biodiversity and water.

# SOUTH WEST FOREST SURVEY GUIDE | April 2022

## Background on particular questions that people have asked us about:

### QUESTION 1: Values

This is the critical decade for acting on the climate and biodiversity crises and we all know how important forests are for those and so many other reasons. This question only gives us three selections that are about the forests' intrinsic and climate system values.

If protecting forests for biodiversity and climate are fundamentally important to you, you may want to select A, B and C and then choose two others that cover the other major reasons you love and value the forests.

### QUESTION 5: Uses

This question asks you to think about how your use of the forests could be improved. Further on, there will be another question about how your experience of the forests could be improved, so try to focus here on the 'uses' you identified in Question 3. If you've said that you use the forests for bird/animal watching, for example, you might want to mention that better management of feral animals would improve this, as would better protection of nesting hollows and under-storey including from mining and fire. Give yourself some time to think about how forests could be better managed and conserved to provide for the things you love about the forests to be maintained and enhanced.

### QUESTIONS 6 & 7: Experiences

Do you feel exhilarated / rejuvenated / at peace / in awe when you're in the forests, or do you feel angry / sad / despairing? Maybe a bit of both depending on which part you visit? Think about this while you're answering the questions on experiences.

The survey can be found here:

Closing date: **1 MAY 2022**

<https://bit.ly/SWForestSurvey2022>



**QUESTIONS 8, 9 & 10:**

**Health of the forests**

**QUESTION 8:** Imagine and describe a good old healthy beautiful forest. It might help to think in layers: from the soil and the ground cover to the mid-storey, to the canopy, describing what it looks like and what the components are doing or how they are interacting with each other. You don't need to use all the lingo if you don't have it, the question is asking for your personal reflections on what a good old healthy beautiful forest looks like to you.

**QUESTION 9:** Do you think the forests are largely in a good healthy condition, or not, or a bit of both? Answer accordingly.

**QUESTION 10:** Be aware that DBCA is working on proposals for thinning forests on the basis that such thinning will improve the ecological health of the forests. This is a complex and contentious area and while there may be cases where thinning would benefit the health of a recovering ecosystem (for example in unnaturally minesite rehabilitation) there are concerns that thinning could have negative impacts on the forests including by compacting soil, spreading dieback, increasing soil temperature and removing critical habitat.

When responding to this question, bear in mind whether you want human interventions to deal with any forest health issues you've raised.

**QUESTIONS 11 - 13:**

**On ground management**

Now that native forest logging is ending, the next Forest Management Plan can be a world-class conservation plan. Think about what this could look like in terms of repairing the damage we've done and allowing forests to continue to thrive and evolve as they have for eons.

**QUESTION 11:** Rank in order from most important at the top bearing in mind the issues with thinning described above in this guide for question 10, and the current planned burning program which is having major impacts on wildlife, biodiversity and climate.

**QUESTION 13:** Here you can go into some more detail. Go wild! What do you think should be done to repair some of the damage we've done? Should we be prioritising restoring cleared forest and linking up habitat and river systems? Are you happy with the way that foxes and cats are being managed in the forests, should there be more funding so that Government isn't allowing Alcoa to sponsor the Western Shield program? What about fire management – is there a better method you want to suggest, or more science you think is warranted? What about Traditional Owner led management and properly resourced Aboriginal Ranger Programs designed and implemented by Noongar / Bibbulmun people.

**QUESTION 14: Economic, social & environmental opportunities**

Describe what you think should be allowed and developed in the forests – perhaps there are some scientific studies, education opportunities, Aboriginal cultural programs or others that you want to see developed?

Also feel free to describe what you think should not be allowed. This seems to be the most logical place to set out any objections or concerns you may have.

Thanks very much for everything you do for the forests. It's incredible how far we've come together and this phase – ensuring that the policy breakthrough is implemented – is critically important. We cannot take our eyes off the prize until the forests are fully and securely protected and we have a world-class forest conservation plan in place. We're in the strongest position we've ever been in to finally get this done.

Feel free to get in touch for further advice or with any queries or suggestions,

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WAFA recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the Traditional Owners and Custodians across Australia. We acknowledge that Sovereignty was never ceded, and that Australia always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.