

#WerribeeLovesForests Report

Community survey findings

24/10/18



In the last few months the Friends of the Earth Forest Collective have been active in the electoral district of Werribee, conducting surveys of the local constituents to understand what they think about Victoria's native forests.

Methods

Data were collected by Forest Collective volunteers and locals from the Werribee district. Each survey respondent provided their name and address, and was then asked to provide an answer to three questions related to native forests and native forest logging. The following survey questions were asked:

1. **Are you aware that native forests are being logged by the state government?**
2. **What should native forests be a place for?**
3. **Do you support the GFNP proposal?**

Results

In total, 292 surveys were collected from constituents of Werribee and surrounding districts including Tarneit, Altona, Laverton, Bellarine and Melton. 231 of respondents were from the district of Werribee itself.

Key findings

- More than 1 in 4 (44%) of respondents surveyed said they were aware that native forests are being logged by the state government.
- More than 8 out of 10 (86%) of respondents in the Werribee electoral district said that forests should be a places for wildlife, trees and nature to be protected. 38% of respondents said that our forests should be protected as places of recreation, carbon stores and water supply to catchments.
- Only 1% of those surveyed believed that native forests should be logged for wood and paper products.
- More than 9 out of 10 (95%) of respondents living in in the Werribee electoral district that were surveyed said they support the creation of a Great Forest National Park (Table 1) with 74% of constituents surveyed in the Werribee district strongly supporting the the creation of a Great Forest National Park

Table 1: Community responses to native forest surveys conducted in Werribee electoral district (%).

Are you aware that native forests are being logged by the state government?	Surveys from Werribee and surrounding districts of Tarneit, Altona, Laverton, Bellarine and Melton (%)	Surveys from Werribee district (%)
Very aware	18	16
Aware	11	12
Somewhat aware	16	16
Not aware	56	56
What should native forests be a place for?		
Wildlife, trees and nature to be protected	85	86
Recreation activities	16	15
Logging for wood and paper products	1	1
Safely storing carbon in trees to help fight climate change	15	13
Providing drinking water for cities like Melbourne?	12	10
Do you support the GFNP proposal?		
Strongly Support	73	74
Support	22	21
Oppose	1	0
Strongly Oppose	0	0
Unsure / Don't know	4	4

Summary

Independent polling and community surveys have consistently shown overwhelming support for the creation of a Great Forest National Park to protect native forests from logging. The majority of Victorians value native forests for biodiversity, carbon sequestration, water supply and recreation.

A statewide poll conducted by ReachTEL in 2016 showed over 92% of Victorians think that state forests should be places for wildlife, trees and nature to be protected, recreation activities, commercial tourism and safely storing carbon. The same poll found just 7% of Victorians think state forests for be places for logging for wood and paper products.

These statewide results are mirrored by data collected from Werribee and surrounding electoral districts and show strong support for the protection of native forests from logging.

The seat of Werribee is held by the Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas, a key decision maker in when it comes to protecting native forests from logging. State owned logging agency VicForests undertakes logging operations in Victoria's state forests. As a government owned company, VicForests sole shareholder is Treasurer Tim Pallas.

Survey results from data collected within Treasurer Tim Pallas' electorate demonstrate strong support for the protection of forests among local Werribee constituents and that protecting forests from logging is a vote winner for the Labor party.



Photo: Volunteers from Friends of the Earth at Werribee station collecting survey data