

## VicForests releases social impact summary report to Noojee community

VicForests today released to the Noojee community a social impact scoping summary report conducted last August that assessed concerns around plans to harvest coupes near the town.

VicForests' General Manager, Corporate Affairs, Alex Messina, said he has released the report because it will give stakeholders including local residents and the Baw Baw Shire Council a summary of the feedback provided to VicForests during the interviews in August 2017.

“This study was originally intended as an internal training and learning exercise. It involved confidential comments from 20 interviewees from the Noojee district about their views on harvesting the three coupes on the current TRP near the town.

“However, after a few requests regarding the Noojee study, I have asked the independent external author to review and prepare the summary for public release without specific identifying details.

“We are striving to be transparent and open as possible to support community discussion.

“Harvesting near Noojee remains in abeyance until a Federal Court resolves a statement of claims made by Friends of Leadbeater’s Possum relating to five coupes, including Noojee’s Backdoor coupe.

“Nevertheless, given the requests for this study, I feel that preparing an appropriate summary for release is worthwhile and respectful of the community’s discussions.”

“The study identifies the issues that have more recently been raised and discussed with at several community meetings in Noojee since last August.

These include concerns such as:

- Visual amenity
- Tourism and the local economy
- Altered landscape
- Impacts on native forests, habitat or species
- Truck movements

Some comments in the study included that harvesting could be an opportunity to show visitors and schools how VicForests approached native forest management.

The 'VicForests Social Impact Assessment Development: Scoping studies, Noojee' report can be downloaded at <http://www.vicforests.com.au/static/uploads/files/vf-report-pilot-studies-noojee-fitzgerald-wfyltoabspdm.pdf>

Community members can comment to VicForests via <http://www.vicforests.com.au/contact-us/melbourne>

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