

Aboriginal Engagement Policy

VicForests respects that Traditional Owners are the original custodians of the land and resources in Victoria and have a special and enduring connection to Country

VicForests acknowledges that the ability of Aboriginal people to properly participate in public land and forest management has been limited by past injustices.

VicForests sees opportunity for Traditional Owners and their communities to play a greater role in management of Victoria's State forests.

Through this policy, we highlight our commitment to improved protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage and respect for native title and traditional land use rights.

In addition, we seek to identify and explore practical and meaningful ways that VicForests can collaborate and work with Traditional Owners in regional Victoria to improve our mutual understanding and to assist Aboriginal people and VicForests to meet shared aspirations and objectives.

Our Commitment

Respect native title, the rights and interests of Traditional Owners and to have procedures and plans in place to achieve this.

Work respectfully and collaboratively with relevant Aboriginal groups and agencies to improve protection of Aboriginal cultural, spiritual and natural heritage values in Victoria's State forests.

Provide improved opportunities for involvement of Traditional Owners in broader forest management planning processes and practices.

Implement procedures and plans that meet our legal obligations under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic), Native Title Act 1993 (Cth), Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic) and Coroners Act 1985 (Vic).

Identify and develop employment, contracting and training opportunities with Traditional Owners to foster mutual learning and improved capacity and participation in land management.

Work with Traditional Owners to ensure staff and contractors are appropriately trained in cultural awareness and cultural heritage.

Develop protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country in consultation with Traditional Owner groups.