

# Forest products of the Cobboboonee forest

The Cobboboonee forest has been a source of natural resources such as timber, firewood, gravel, minerals and honey for many years. Resources from the forest have principally supplied communities in Portland, Heywood and other nearby locations. Establishment of a new national park and forest park in the forest will require changes to some of these uses.

The Gunditjmara people have recently had 'native title' recognised for Crown land in far South West Victoria (including the Cobboboonee forest). The native title rights permit Gunditjmara people to take forest products in a sustainable manner in line with traditional usage.

## Firewood and timber

In 2002 all sawlog licenses over the Cobboboonee forest were surrendered meaning that there are no current companies or jobs that might be affected by decisions about the location of the national or forest park.

Sawlog and firewood harvesting is not permitted in national parks. Sawlog harvesting is also generally not permitted in forest parks. However, it is likely that sustainable quantities of firewood and other minor forest produce will continue to be available from the forest park.

DSE has an established system for issuing permits for collection and harvesting of firewood and minor timber products from the Cobboboonee forest. Each year a number of small areas, called minor forest produce coupes, are set aside for the collection and/or harvesting of firewood and timber products in the annually updated Wood Utilisation Plan for the Portland FMA .

Community members and commercial operators purchase permits through DSE to take an agreed type and amount of timber from these areas. The bulk of timber extracted from the Cobboboonee forest is firewood collected by the public for domestic use, or collected by commercial operators who then sell the firewood. Utilisation of firewood has declined in recent years, and coincides with reducing access to wood from past logging residues.

The permits issued for the 2006/07 financial year provide a snapshot of firewood sourced from the Portland Forest Management Area (FMA). The Cobboboonee forest supplied 57 percent of the total quantities obtained from the broader Portland FMA in 2006/07.

The following table shows the contribution of firewood and timber products from the Cobboboonee forest to the Portland FMA as a whole.

	<b>Cobboboonee forest</b> 2006/07	<b>Portland FMA</b> 2006/07	<b>Portland FMA</b> 2001/02
<b>Domestic firewood</b>	523 m <sup>3</sup>	924m <sup>3</sup>	2186m <sup>3</sup>
<b>Commercial firewood</b>	487 m <sup>3</sup>	487m <sup>3</sup>	1544m <sup>3</sup>

DSE closely controls the use of the forest for firewood production, managing the volume of firewood harvested and specifying the sites that may be accessed. All operations are subject to the provisions of the Code of Practices for Timber Production.

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## Honey

DSE licenses 42 bee sites in the Cobboboonee forest as part of a total of 103 sites throughout the Portland FMA. These sites are particularly active over the spring and summer months, with most apiarists shifting their hives throughout western Victoria to take advantage of seasonal flowering in the forests. There is a higher density of sites in the southern end of Cobboboonee, especially in the vicinity of the Surry River. Many of these sites are in disused gravel pits, old log landings or other small clearings in the forest which enable apiarists access.

The bee sites in the Cobboboonee forest are currently used by 5 licensees. Licenses are paid 6 or 12 months in advance, with existing licenses due for renewal in November 2007. Beekeeping is generally a permitted use in a Forest Park and is a permitted use in a number of national parks.

## Earth resources

Traces of past exploration can be seen in the seismic lines throughout Cobboboonee, with a slightly higher density in the southern half of the forest. Native vegetation has re-established on these lines, with some maintained as control lines for prescribed burns and wildfire suppression.

A portion of the western side of Cobboboonee forest is within a petroleum exploration permit. An application has been made for an adjoining petroleum exploration permit, which includes the remainder of the Cobboboonee forest. A geothermal exploration permit covers the far south-west corner of the state, including the Cobboboonee forest.

There are no current mining licenses within the Cobboboonee forest. However there are ten small gravel pits distributed throughout the Cobboboonee that are used by DSE to maintain the surface of the roads within Cobboboonee forest. The pits are adjacent to the roads, are less than two metres in depth and 2000 square metres in area. The most productive areas for gravel pits have been in the central and southern sections of Cobboboonee forest.