

Next steps

The *Part 2 - Hydrological studies* investigates the impact on water yield of various catchment management, bushfire and climate change scenarios.

The forest management options modelled include gradually phasing out timber harvesting, considering alternative timber supplies from hardwood plantations, extending the time between clearfell harvesting events, maintaining current harvest levels and silvicultural options such as thinning.

Part 2 - Timber substitution study examines the feasibility and impacts of establishing an adequate area of substitute plantations outside of the State forest supplying water to Melbourne.

These studies will feed into the Sustainability Assessment which will assess the impacts of a range of forest management regimes for the State forest supplying water to Melbourne.

The Sustainability Assessment

The issues around evaluating wood production and water supply are complex and difficult to resolve. The Sustainability Assessment will bring together the findings of the completed studies and be a tool to assess the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of different forest management regimes.

The Sustainability Assessment comprises two stages. Stage 1: Developing a credible method for the assessment in consultation with stakeholders and interested community members. Stage 2: The sustainability assessment.

Stage 1 is complete. See Fig 2 for a diagram of the sustainability assessment method. Stage 2 will commence during March 2008 and is due for completion during September 2008.

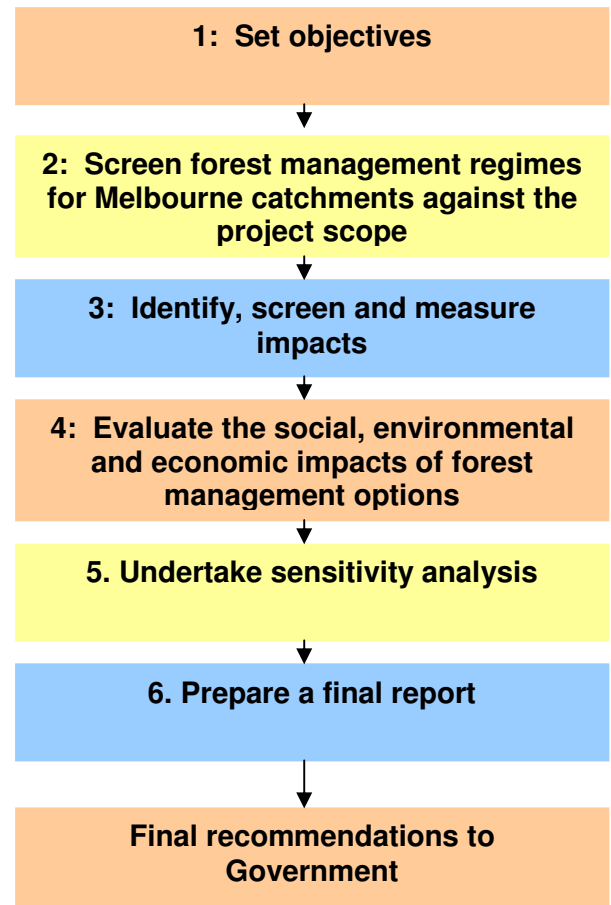
A Peer Review Panel provided independent advice during Stage 1 and will continue this involvement during Stage 2. The Peer Review Panel members have significant experience and knowledge in the fields of economics, the environment and social issues.

How are members of the public involved?

Stakeholders and interested community members were involved in the design of the sustainability assessment method to evaluate the social, environmental and economic aspects of management options for the State forests supplying water to Melbourne.

Stakeholders and focus group members will be involved during steps 2 and 3 of the sustainability assessment (Fig 1).

Fig 1: Process to for the Sustainability Assessment



Making decisions

The results of the Sustainability Assessment will guide decision making for the future management of the State forests supplying water to Melbourne.

For more information:

To download the completed studies visit the DSE website (www.dse.vic.gov.au) or call the Customer Service Centre Ph. 136 186.

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