

Following the money:

**The unfinished transition away from
native forest logging**

A report by Environmental Justice Australia



We acknowledge the
Traditional Owners of the
lands and waters where
we are each joining from
and pay our respects to
Elders past and present.



Lake Tyers State Park 2026

today you'll hear from...



Luke Chamberlain
Campaign + Policy Officer



Nicola Rivers
EJA Co-CEO



Natalie Hogan
Senior Lawyer



Help us continue this work. **We can't do it without you.**

what the report found: the money

- Around \$1.5 billion was committed, but there is **no clear public account of where it all went.**
- EJA identified approximately **\$884.9 million** in transition-related funding through public records and forensic accounting analysis.
- Some companies received public funding while remaining connected to native forest timber.

The public paid for a transition, but still doesn't have a clear account of what that money delivered.



The table below summarises our best assessment of identifiable funding flows, from publicly available sources.

TABLE 1
Summary of transition funding identified through public records and forensic accounting analysis

RECIPIENT	IDENTIFIED FUNDING	RELEVANT OBSERVATIONS
Victorian native forest mills	\$239.1 million	Most identifiable funding flowed to mills that remain open. Analysis undertaken for this report found that approximately 98% of DEECA funding to operating mills went to mills that continue to process native forest timber.
Harvest & haulage contractors	\$118 million	Analysis undertaken for this report found that 15 new five-year DEECA contracts were awarded to companies that received transition payouts, meaning many remain active in cutting and hauling native forest trees.
VicForests	\$95.1 million	Direct public funding provided during the wind-down and closure of the government-owned logging agency. Public reporting does not clearly identify how all of this funding was used or whether it forms part of the government’s stated transition commitment.
ForestWorks worker & industry support programs	\$71.4 million	Worker transition and industry support initiatives. Unspent funds remained as at 30 June 2025.
Opal Paper (reported)	\$200 million	Publicly reported funding associated with restructuring linked to Victorian native forest supply. This figure could not be fully reconciled against publicly available government records.
Gippsland plantation investment program	\$120 million	Intended to support transition toward plantation-based supply.
Supply chain companies	\$15.8 million	Funding provided through the Timber Supply Chain Resilience Package.
Local councils	\$12.3 million	Regional transition and community support funding. This was budgeted at \$22 million, suggesting allocated funds remain unspent.
Community organisations	\$6 million	Community grants and local support initiatives.
Forest industry associations	\$2.1 million	Funding to industry bodies.
Other businesses	\$5.1 million	Support programs for businesses unrelated to native forest logging in impacted regions.
TOTAL IDENTIFIABLE FUNDING	\$884.9 million (approx)	





what the report found: the loopholes

- Ending VicForests did not legally protect forests.
- 1.8 million hectares of state forest were promised legal protection. **Not a single tree has received it.**
- **Loopholes keep native forest timber moving,** through private land clearing, salvage operations, Forest Produce Licences and Forest Fire Management.

Without permanent legal protection, forests remain vulnerable to future governments, industry pressure and shifting regulatory pathways.





FIGURE 2

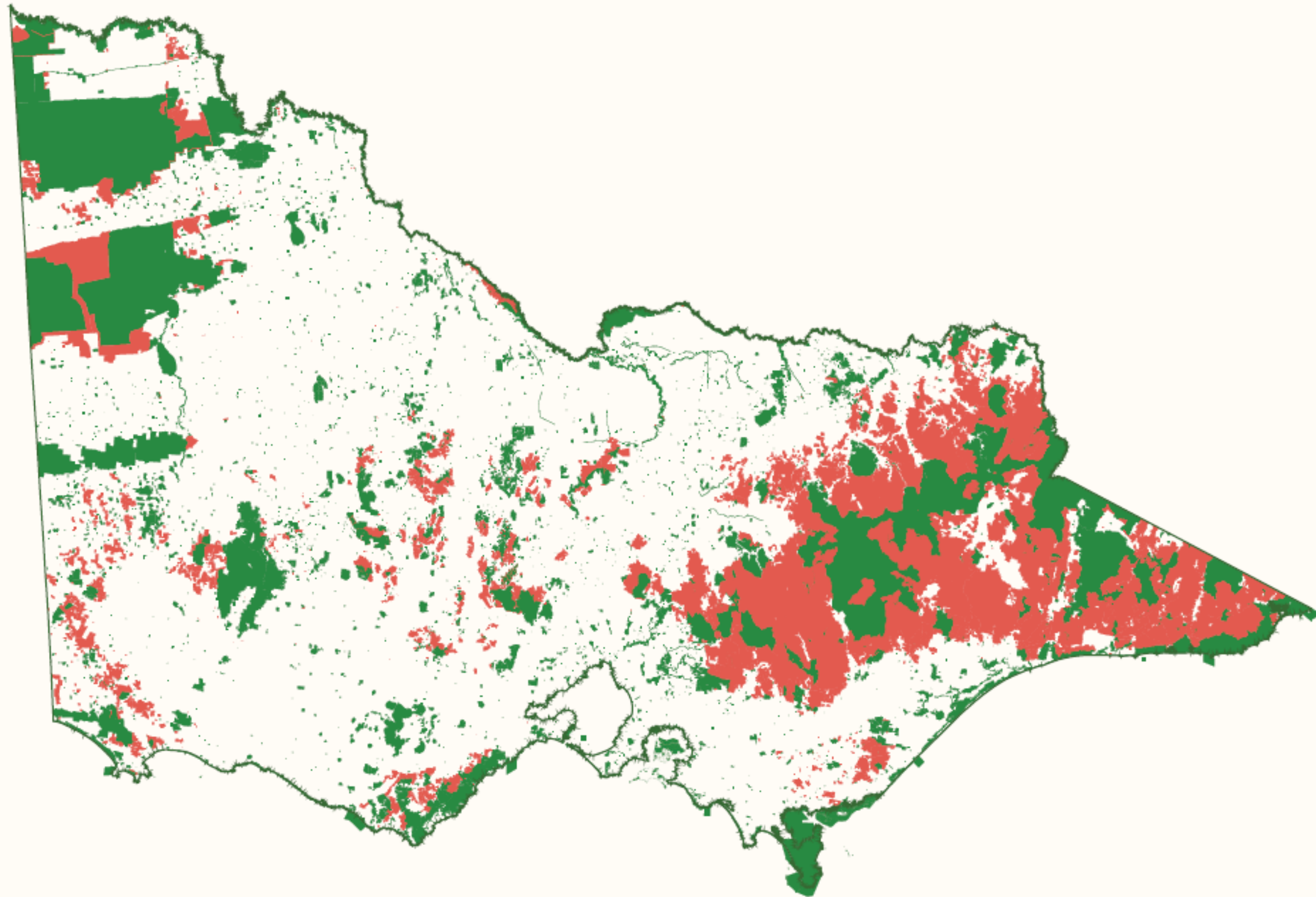
Forests formerly allocated to native forest logging and areas with permanent legislative protection in Victoria

MAP KEY:

■ Forests previously available for native forest logging (until 30 December 2023)

■ Forests with permanent legislative protection

NOTE: At the time of writing, forests previously managed under the native forest logging system in eastern Victoria have not been transferred into legislated protected area tenures.





How to end native forest logging for real

- **Transparency:** Show where the money went and what it delivered.
- **Close loopholes:** Stop native forest logging continuing in new forms.
- **Permanent protection:** Protect forests through law, not policy promises.

The conditions for change are converging. Now is the moment to turn public attention into political pressure.

TAKE ACTION



QUESTIONS?





Help us continue this work. **We can't do it without you.**

Thankyou



ENVIRONMENTAL
JUSTICE
AUSTRALIA

