



VicForests

Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

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Our vision: We are leading forest managers operating to the highest standards and our work provides long term value for Victorian communities.

SUSTAINABLE

CUSTOMER FOCUSED

RESPECT

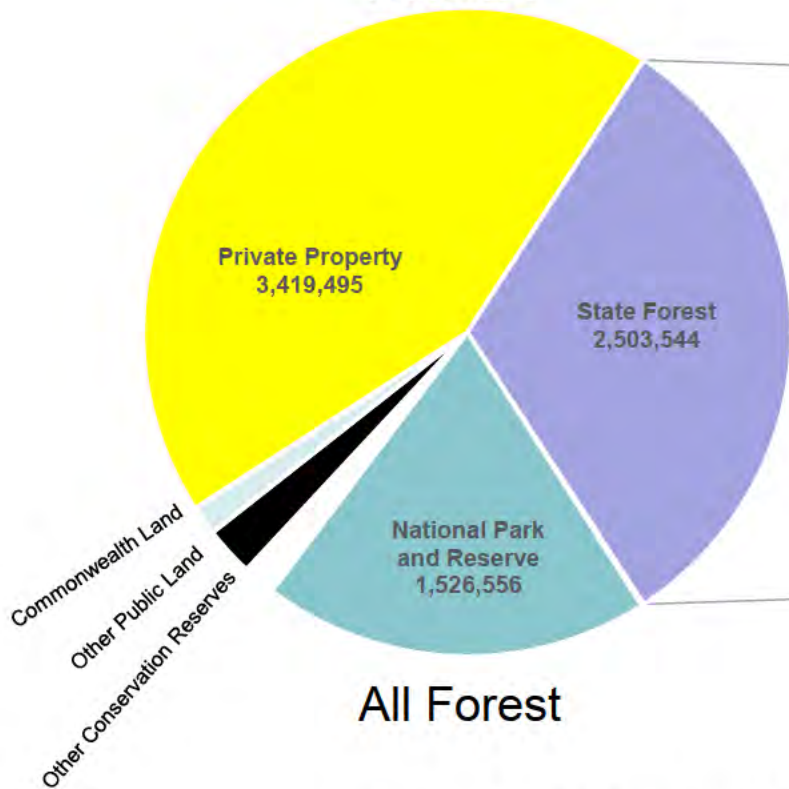
SAFE

PROFESSIONAL

Resource Base

Eastern Victoria Land Status (ha)

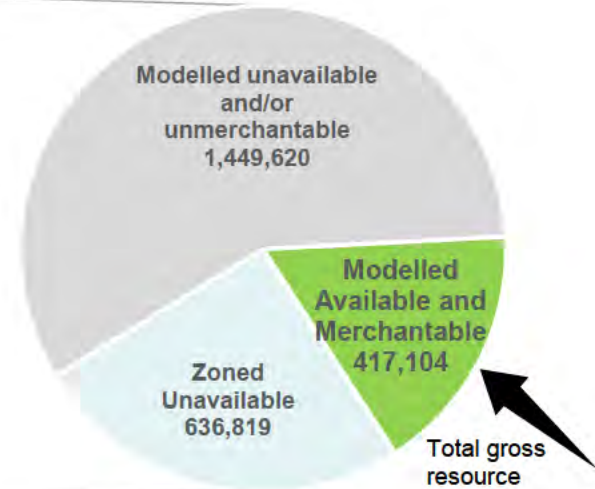
≈7.5m ha



All Forest



of which



State Forest

Since 2004 National Park and Reserve has increased by 7% while State Forest has decreased by 6%

Annual Harvest Area

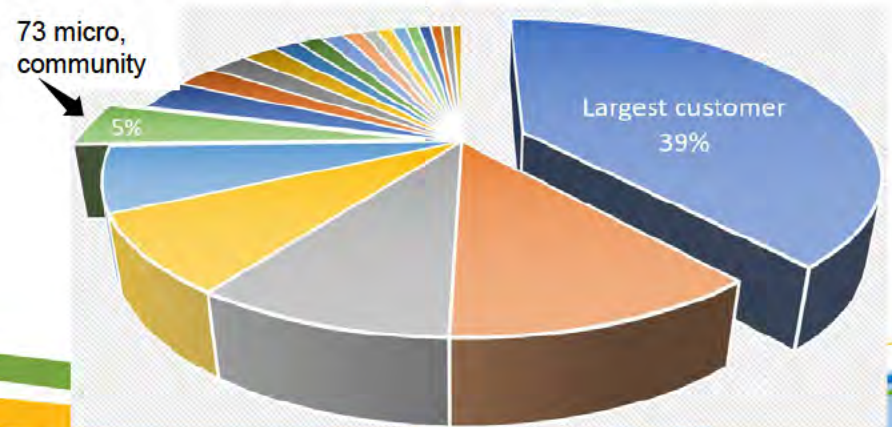


- VicForests harvests around 0.04% of forest annually
- All areas harvested are regenerated - it takes between 60 to 120 years for trees to grow to merchantable size
- VicForests does not harvest Old Growth Forest
- Most areas being harvested now (particularly the Central Highlands) are regeneration following the 1939 fires
- Anticipated areas for harvest to 2030 are:
 - Ash – 10,000 to 12,000ha
 - Mixed Species – 20,000 to 23,000ha

Harvested Area - Eastern Victoria (ha)



Customer Snapshot (by volume)



VicForests 5 Year Planning Process

Year	Five-Year Planning Stage	Core Tasks
1	Strategic Analysis	Forest inventory system generates a five year harvest schedule
		Identified coupes are entered into the VicForests Planning System
		Stakeholder Engagement at a landscape level
2	Desktop Assessment	Desktop assessment of coupes
		Area assessment and review of forest values and threatened species
		Creation of preliminary coupe maps and plans
3	Field Assessment	Thorough field assessment of coupes
		Identification and recording of High Conservation Values in the field
		Creation of Interim Coupe Maps and Plans
4	Approval Process	Government applications and notifications
		Amendment to the Timber Release Plan
		Creation of the Rolling Operational Plan
5	Harvest Management	Pre-harvest field assessment with contractor
		Forest Protection Survey
		Forward road construction
		Field marking and boundary confirmation
		Finalise operational coupe plan and map
Post - Harvest	Post - Harvest	Harvest and audit compliance
		Check harvest and boundary compliance
		Creation of Post-harvest map
		Coupe regeneration activities
		Coupe finalisation and removal from Timber Release Plan



Harvesting and regeneration systems

- VicForests is implementing a range of **silvicultural** systems and techniques resulting in retaining a significant number of trees in each coupe for current and future habitat for native species:
 - Protects hollow bearing trees, which are home to many species
 - Recruits future hollow-bearing trees, through planning for mid-term and long-term habitat, as well as retaining trees for immediate biodiversity needs
 - Connects habitat patches, allowing animals to move between areas in the forest
 - Regenerates forest ecology through a focus on lower intensity regeneration burning and mechanical disturbance.
- Shift from traditional clear-fall harvesting systems to adaptive variable retention and protection of hollow bearing trees

Variable retention harvesting in Victorian mountain ash forest



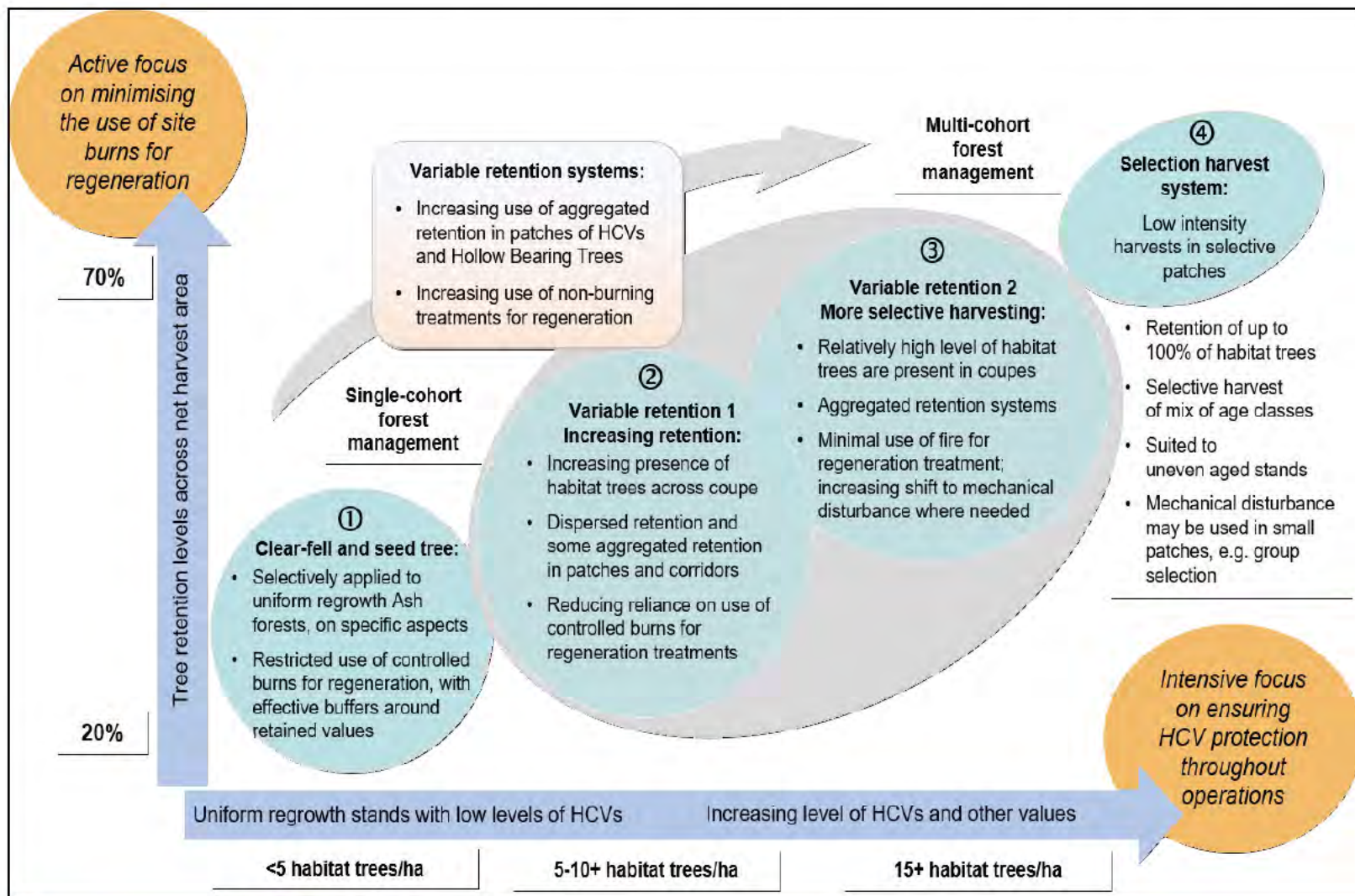
Prepared for
Forest & Wood Products Australia



by

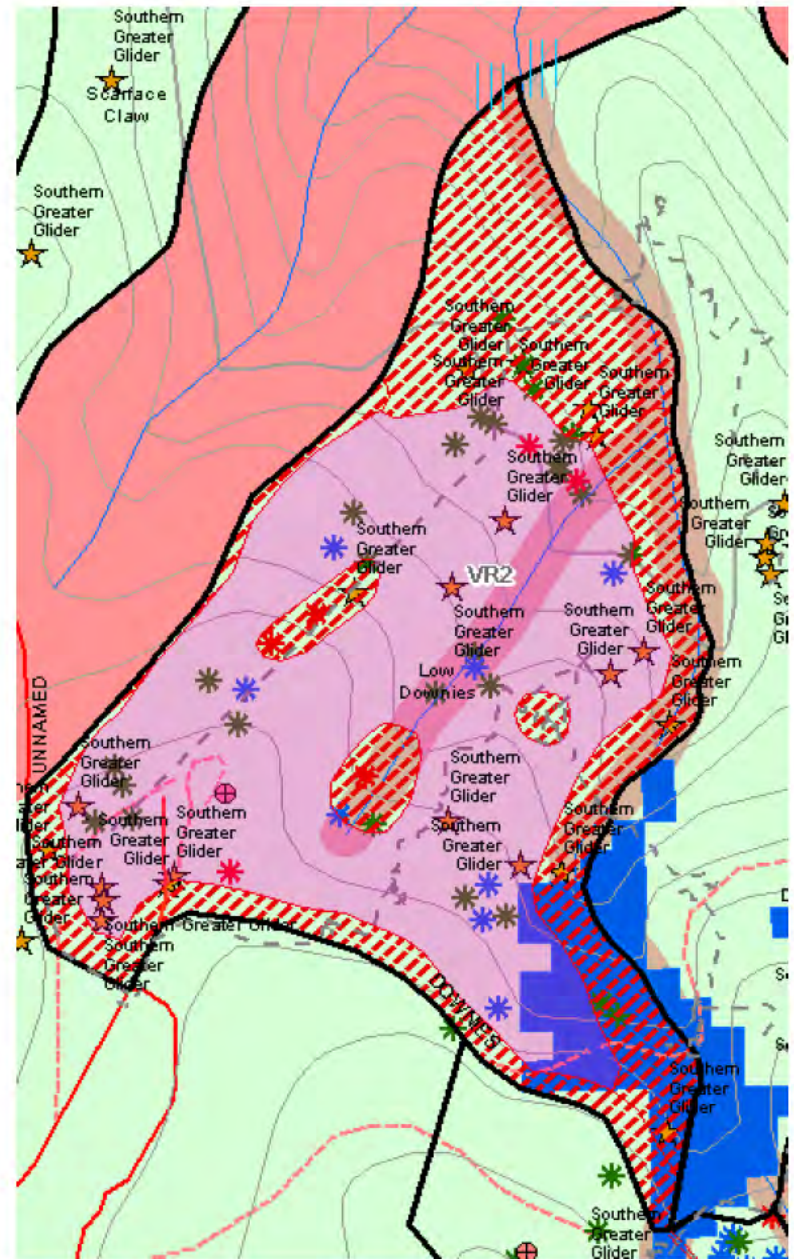
D. Lindenmayer

VicForests harvesting & regeneration systems to manage habitat values



Retention Planning

- Habitat tree density assessments are used to define the baseline silvicultural systems that will be applied to proposed harvest areas
- Retention design and selection of silvicultural systems are adapted to consider other High Conservation Values identified through different stages of coupe planning e.g. presence of Greater Gliders



Mountain Ash forest ecosystem in the Central Highlands

VicForests is ensuring sustainability of the mountain ash forest ecosystem by:

- Protecting current and future hollow-bearing trees
- Implementing regrowth retention harvesting in 50% of all mountain ash forest in the Central Highlands
- Variable retention harvesting to protect current hollow-bearing trees and other important habitat features within a coupe and retain trees that will provide future hollows in the next 50–100 years
- Increased habitat retention

VicForests' retention systems identifies hollow-bearing trees as a high conservation value resource

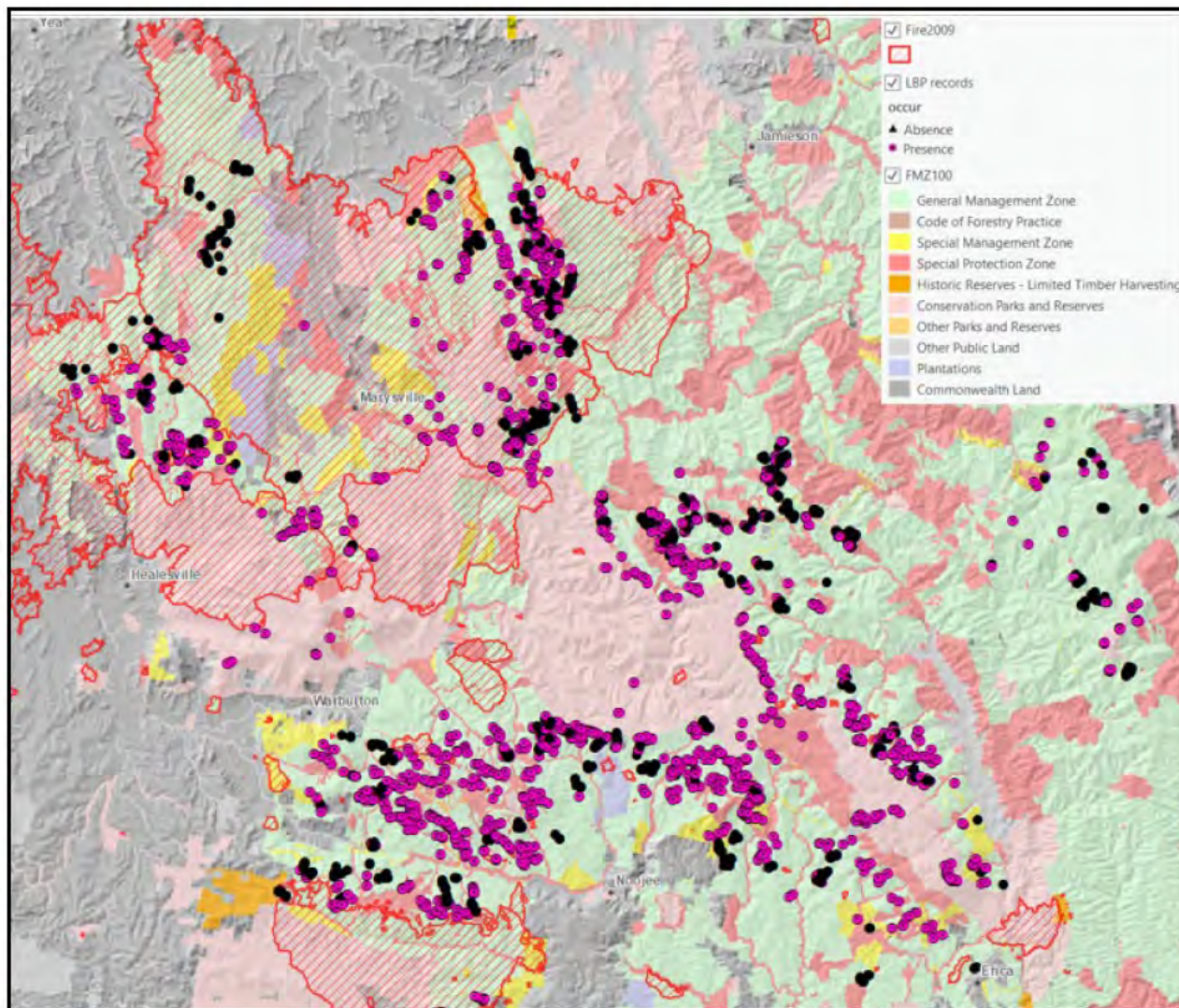


Monitoring and Evaluation - Retention

- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation to guide strategies for continuous improvement
- Ongoing monitoring of flora and fauna persistence post-harvest and to evaluate the effectiveness of new systems in maintaining ecological integrity of harvested areas
- New research: The impact of forest stand dynamics on Leadbeater's Possum (LBD) presence



New research: The impact of forest stand dynamics on Leadbeater's Possum (LBP) presence

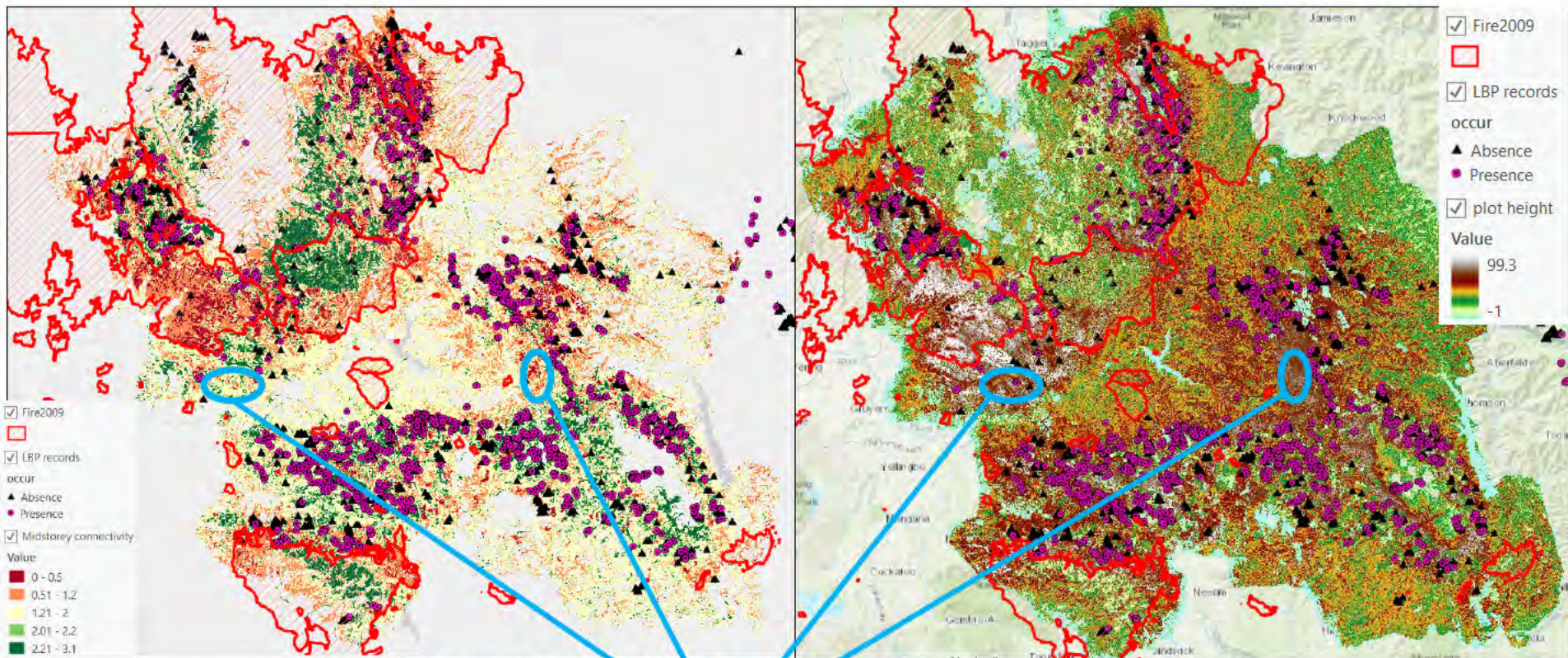


- LBP detections indicate a high correlation with mid-storey connectivity
- LBP detections indicate a low correlation with old tall forests
- Mid-storey density and connectivity thresholds at 20-30 years after disturbance
- Fire has a stronger impact on mid-storey and LBP presence than harvesting

The impact of forest stand dynamics on Leadbeater's Possum (LBP) presence (Con't)

Midstorey density

Overstorey Canopy height



Unburnt National Parks and Unburnt or Unharvested State forest:

1. taller forest canopy
2. less mid-/under-storey density
3. less suitable for LBP