

8th March, 2018

**Submission to Renew  
NSW Regional Forest Agreements**

This submission is to support the Renewal of the forestry industry in the Eden and Southern Regions of NSW.

The Eden RFA expires on the 26th August, 2019 and the Southern RFA expires on the 24th April, 2021.

If the timber harvesting operations were to have their quota of allowable working forests cut-back any further in these areas you would see disastrous consequences for many of the towns in these areas – we actually need more areas to be made available.

In Eden, for example, where Allied Natural Wood Exports (ANWE) operate the chip mill (formerly South East Forest Exports) and the Pentarch group of companies operate the whole log export facility adjacent to the chip mill. There would be devastation to the town if these businesses were unable to continue operations long into the future.

Blueridge Hardwoods is a Sawmill situated in Eden and can only continue operations if there is a hardwood forest operation supplying timber to the Chipmill, due to the nature of the operation. This mill cannot economically process softwood logs nor compete with the specialist softwood sawmill already existing in Bombala.

There are 6 contractors specifically located in the “Eden area” and their operations, including log haulage provide full time employment to local workers. There are also a number of truck owner/drivers who also support these contractors in delivery to the Chipmill, whole log export operation and Blueridge Hardwoods Sawmill.

At least 50 people are directly employed in the harvest and haulage area of the Eden Region and contractors have millions of dollars invested in plant and equipment., including employee numbers at the Chipmill (approximately 30 direct) and Blueridge (approximately 45 direct), you can see quite a few people rely directly on the timber industry for their employment.

These industries also support additional jobs in East Gippsland, the Monaro and areas of the south coast, north of Bega.

Forestry Corporation, EPA, WorkCover, are just a few Government agencies who will be impacted should the timber industry in the Eden RFA area not continue.

There are many service industries such as mechanical, stevedoring, tug and line boat operators and tyre suppliers who rely on servicing the timber industry for the majority of their work.

All the people who are involved directly or indirectly with the timber industry in the Eden area support our small businesses, schools, medical facilities, to name a few, so to reduce the operations of a viable industry in this region will have a remarkable impact on the area.

Forestry workers also support major tourist events such as the Eden Whale Festival and local woodchopping competitions

Full time jobs lost by closure of the Eden cannery and previous restructures of the forest and fishing industry have never been fully replaced by the tourism industry. Many of the 'replacement' jobs are casual and part-time, so the employment statistics do not fully reflect the economic impact of these restructures on Eden and the surrounding area.

I am hopeful that good sense will prevail when considering the social impact on towns in the Eden RFA area where populations are already low (refer to 2016 census for individual town population figures).

Government Agencies control the overall harvesting operations in all RFA areas so the harvest operators are adequately controlled by the Integrated Forest Operations Approval and other licence conditions of operation and have been for years.

The forest industry is one of the most environmentally regulated primary industries in NSW and many issues raised by opponents of harvesting of native forests, do not accurately reflect the environmental performance of the industry.