

NSW REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENTS

There are three Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) in NSW – Eden, North East and Southern. These agreements have recently been reviewed and renewed following an extensive consultation process.

RFAs are 20-year agreements between the Australian and four state governments for the sustainable management and conservation of Australia's native forests, and provide for the long-term stability of forests and forest industries.

In the NSW RFA regions, the total forested area is 8.13 million hectares with more than 4.35 million hectares of forest ecosystems protected in the Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) Reserve System on public land.

The renewed RFAs pave the way for the continued sustainable management of the State's public and private native forests and plantation estates, providing long-term confidence for NSW's \$2.4 billion forest industries and providing critical protection of important environmental assets and threatened species.

The modernisation, renewal and extension of the agreements is the culmination of extensive community consultation and review of emerging issues and changes since the RFAs were developed close to 20 years ago.

Constructive feedback was generated from the more than 3,000 individual submissions and meetings with 300 people in Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Bulahdelah, Eden, Batemans Bay, Tumut and Sydney.

This feedback shaped the renewed agreements to:

- Continue to manage and conserve the CAR Reserve System.
- Support ongoing commitment to the goals, objectives and implementation of the National Forest Policy Statement.
- Strengthen implementation of Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management (ESFM) consistent with adaptive management and continual improvement principles.
- Provide greater transparency, outcomes-focused reporting and long-term sustainability.

- Add a five-year rolling extension mechanism, which is implemented when both parties agree that performance has been satisfactory. This will be supported by independent five-year progress reviews and feedback from public consultation.
- Introduce streamlined reporting requirements with a greater focus on outcomes, and alignment with other reporting cycles.
- Modernise content, including clear references to matters of national environmental significance, climate change, adaptation and carbon issues, updating references to legislation and more accurately reflecting current administrative practices.
- Replace specific wood supply commitment volumes with sustainable yield commitments, so that volumes are based on the circumstances at the time.
- Extend the duration of the RFAs until 2039 and align their expiry dates.

The amendments to each of the three RFAs are generally the same. Regional differences have been maintained if relevant, but otherwise a key intent has been to achieve closer alignment between the three RFAs.

The commitment to improve and renew the NSW RFAs is a key component of the 2016 NSW Forestry Industry Roadmap 2016. The Roadmap sets out the NSW Government's vision for a stronger, more competitive and ecologically sustainable forestry industry..

For more information on the renewed NSW Regional Forest Agreements, visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au