

RFA renewal/ remake submission February 2018 - Rosie White

I submit that the current RFAs in NSW must not be renewed.

The current RFAs have failed. Their purpose to protect the environment, to conserve and ensure a thriving forest industry with ecologically sustainable outcomes has not been achieved.

Climate change has not been addressed in the current RFAs. The effects of climate change must be considered and mitigation action included in the RFAs. The total value of our forests, their survival, that of the species they support, the conservation of carbon, the management of water and the potential effects of climate change are all inextricably linked. The current RFAs are simply no longer appropriate.

The three current RFAs have resulted in significant loss of native forests, loss and depletion of threatened forest species without providing financial viability for the timber industry.

The RFAs involve two million hectares of public property. Land that should be managed for the public good now and in to the future. Land management must adequately protect threatened species, conserve carbon and water and mitigate against climate change.

In terms of economically viable timber production the RFAs have failed. The current timber industry operates at an economic loss. Unrealistic wood contracts have compounded this failure. Additionally, regulations and reviews have poorly administered to the detriment of forest health.

The number of threatened forest species has risen during the life of the current RFAs. Logging is known as a key threat to forest species. With our deplorable rate of species loss the current RFAs must be viewed as in need of a complete review and overhaul.

The 10 and 15 year reviews of the current RFAs have never been undertaken. Thus there has been inadequate assessment of their operation. To simply renew them after 20 years is irresponsible. The circumstances of the timber industry has changed in this time as have the effects of the logging that has been undertaken on the natural condition of the forests....along with the increasing effects of climate change. Additionally, knowledge about the value of native forests and the biodiversity that they support and the contribution that they make beyond the simple fact of growing trees has increased considerably.

This is the opportunity to use existing knowledge about the function and value of forests, to use the available science to re-write and establish new RFAs that inclusively assess and protect the many values and uses of forests as well as accomodating their economic use.

Wood supply contracts and the subsidising of the native wood industry should be fully reviewed before any new RFAs are adopted.

The effects and function of the current RFAs must be evaluated and the results of this evaluation used to inform the content of new RFAs.

The regulation and reviews of forestry operations but be responsibly undertaken.

Biodiversity hotspots and possible areas for reservation in the National Estate should be assessed.

The Great Koala National Park proposal should be thoroughly assessed.

Adequate weight must be given to not only natural attributes but also the benefits of forests to public health and recreation.

There must be a genuine review of all the economic benefits of native forests, particularly in the longer term.

The effects of, and mitigation for, climate change must be included in formulation new RFAs.

Forest management must no longer focus primarily on the value of timber but include all the many other attributes of forests. It must reflect a true commitment to responsibly managing these attributes.

The existing RFAs must not be renewed. Much has changed since they were established. A thorough re-assessment must be undertaken to establish new RFAs that are appropriate for the future. The failure of the existing RFAs must be addressed and rectified according to the best science and experience available.

Rosie White

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