

Attachment in Support of Extending RFA Feedback Submission.

I support of the extension of the Regional Forest Agreements.

The RFAs provide an important structural platform for managing the health and productivity of NSW Forests while also providing stability for Forest Industry participants to invest and grow their businesses with some confidence in the future availability of resource.

During the course of this RFA ... have grown from a local/regional retail/trade focussed business to a company fully committed to the manufacture of High Quality Kiln Dried Hardwood products and their marketing and distribution across Australia and beyond.

.... now directly employ over 300 people plus contractors and suppliers, owning and operating five sawmills, three dry mills and distribution centres in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, New Zealand, the U.S and Europe.

At the core of this is the security of resource that the RFA provides.

... believe this would be better addressed by a rolling 20 year RFA with 5 yearly reviews conducted in a timely manner.

Otherwise we will see the current RFA scenario repeated, that is, of a flurry of investment in the early years of an RFA, then a gradual winding down to nil investment over the later stages of the Agreement. This leads to missed opportunities and significant periods of stagnation in the progress of the industry.

The rolling 20 year agreement structure would allow the industry to plan and invest for its future with a longer term view while also allowing for more agile adjustment of operations on a five yearly basis as new technology and information is discovered and developed.

Hardwood Plantation Supplementation Programme

The current RFA commits to the creation of 10,000 hectares of plantation to **“supplement the supply of High Quality Large Sawlogs and Large Veneer Logs from public forests”**.

While 9,660 hectares were established, a significant proportion (in the Upper North East more than 50%) has been planted with Eucalyptus Dunnii (Dunn’s White Gum) and Eucalyptus Grandis (Flooded Gum). Both these species are unsuitable for high value solid wood products in the Australian market.

E. Dunnii and E. Grandis make up a very small proportion of the current supply mix from both Native and Plantation Forests. They are planted all over the world predominately for woodchips to supply the Pulp and Paper Industry. These species are of the lowest durability, strength and hardness. They will yield little or no volume of sawlogs suitable for the High Quality timber producers on the North Coast.

.... request that a report document the specie mix by area established in the post RFA plantations. Further that a complete inventory of Plantation Specie by supply zone be completed to better inform industry of the species mix and areas established.

We request that a review be conducted to ascertain what areas of unsuitable species could be harvested for woodchips now and replanted with durable species more suited to the original purpose – Supplementation of High Quality Sawlog Supply. As this milestone purpose has not been met request that the Government now fund a programme to meet this critical RFA commitment.

There is currently a one way programme of removal of available resource from the State owned and private forest estate.

That is, new Endangered Ecological Communities are discovered and/or areas set aside for one political or environmental reason or another. This continues to erode the long term sustainable resource base.

One way to address this would be to reassess areas already set aside for their current conservation status with a view to returning those areas deemed safe to do so, back to productive status – as a direct swap. If this is not practical or possible then additional High Quality Hardwood plantations should be established to replace this resource into the future.

.... request that the next RFA contain a mechanism to address this issue.

With regard to growing the resource, have gradually developed a significant portion of our supply from private native regrowth and plantation forests. We have three full time foresters who assist land holders to develop their plans for managing their forests. This provides an additional and flexible supply which is supplementary to our long term core supply arrangements with Forestry Corporation.

We also own and manage our own regrowth and plantation tree farms. We have managed our own forests since the 1950s when purchased our first timber property at That property still provides timber to our mills today. We commenced our first plantation establishment with 20 hectares planted in 2004 and now own and manage over 4,000 hectares of forested land including more than 1,000 hectares of plantation. We plant in excess of 25,000 new seedlings each year. While these will never provide for all our resource needs they will provide the company with further growth and security into the future.

.... request that the Government develop policy to support other landholders to better manage their existing forest estate and encourage the establishment of further areas of trees on farms suitable for future resource provision while still allowing for diversified farm production. This will help provide an important supplementary timber supply for our community into the future.