

Review of New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements

Combined second and third five-yearly review – 2004 to 2014

Questions and Answers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

General	2
What is a Regional Forest Agreement (RFA)?	2
What does an RFA seek to achieve?	2
RFA five-yearly reviews	2
Why are the NSW RFAs being reviewed?	2
What is the review period?	3
Who is undertaking the review and what is the process?	3
Do the public get to have a say?	4
How do I make a submission?	4
When will the public consultation period end?	4
What happens after the public consultation period ends?	5
What is the role of the Independent Reviewer?	5
Where can I get further information about the review?	5
Where can I get the Implementation Report?	5
RFA extension process	6
What is happening to the RFAs beyond August 2019?	6

Review of New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements

Combined second and third five-yearly review – 2004 to 2014

GENERAL

WHAT IS A REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT (RFA)?

Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) are 20-year agreements between the Commonwealth of Australia and State governments, which provide a framework for the conservation and sustainable management of Australia's native forests.

There are three RFAs within NSW that cover the following regions: Eden, North East and Southern.

The RFAs are given legislative status through the *Regional Forest Agreements Act 2002* (Cth) and provide long-term certainty for forest-based industries, forest-dependent communities and the conservation of natural and heritage values.

RFAs are the result of years of scientific study, consultation and negotiation covering a diverse range of interests.

WHAT DOES AN RFA SEEK TO ACHIEVE?

The NSW RFAs seek to balance and protect the full range of environmental, social, economic and heritage values that forests provide for current and future generations.

They are a key outcome of the **1992 National Forest Policy Statement** through which the Australian, state and territory governments committed to the sustainable management of all Australian forests, whether the forest is on public or private land, or reserved or available for production.

The purposes of the NSW RFAs are:

- to identify a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserve system and provide for the conservation of those areas
- to provide for the ecologically sustainable management and use of forests in each RFA region, and
- to provide for the long-term stability of forests and forest industries.

RFAs provide a framework that allows forestry operations to occur without any further Commonwealth approvals under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) and are legal instruments under the *Export Control Act 1982* (Cth).

RFA FIVE-YEARLY REVIEWS

WHY ARE THE NSW RFAS BEING REVIEWED?

An important element of each of the NSW RFAs is the requirement for a five-yearly review of the performance of the RFAs.

Review of New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements

Combined second and third five-yearly review – 2004 to 2014

The purpose of the five-yearly review is to provide an assessment of progress of the RFA against the established milestones, and includes:

- the extent to which milestones, commitments and obligations have been met;
- a review of the recommendations from previous reviews;
- the results of monitoring of sustainability indicators; and
- invited public comment on the performance of the Agreement.

WHAT IS THE REVIEW PERIOD?

This is the combined second and third five-yearly review of implementation and performance of the NSW RFAs. The combined second and third five-yearly review period is from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2014.

WHO IS UNDERTAKING THE REVIEW AND WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

The RFA Implementation Report, *A report on progress with implementation of the New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements: Second and third five-yearly reviews July 2004 – June 2014* (Implementation Report) was jointly prepared by the Australian and NSW governments.

It assesses the performance of each of the NSW RFAs from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2014.

The agencies involved in preparing the Implementation Report are:

- Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (Australian Government)
- Department of the Environment and Energy (Australian Government)
- Environment Protection Authority (NSW Government)
- Department of Primary Industries (NSW Government)
- Department of Planning and Environment (NSW Government)
- Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW Government)
- Forestry Corporation of NSW (NSW State Owned Corporation).

With the release of the Implementation Report, a period of public comment commences. Submissions that are received will be analysed by an Independent Reviewer who will provide a report to both governments in the first half of 2018 on the RFA review, which includes an analysis of issues raised in the public submission process.

The Australian and NSW governments will prepare a joint response to the recommendations from the Independent Reviewer's report for public release in 2018.

Review of New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements

Combined second and third five-yearly review – 2004 to 2014

DO THE PUBLIC GET TO HAVE A SAY?

Yes. Public submissions on the implementation of the RFAs during the review period and the Implementation Report are invited.

Submissions may be made online, by post or email, and must be received no later than **5pm on Friday 23 February 2018**.

HOW DO I MAKE A SUBMISSION?

Submissions can be provided:

Online at: www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry/about-public-native-forestry/regional-forest-agreements-assessments/review-regional-forest-agreements

By email to: forestry.policy@epa.nsw.gov.au

By mail to:

NSW Regional Forest Agreements
Forestry Branch
NSW Environment Protection Authority
PO Box A290
Sydney South NSW 1232

All submissions sent by email or mail should include a completed cover sheet. The cover sheet can be downloaded from the EPA website.

All submissions will be treated as public documents and be published on the NSW EPA website unless the submitter clearly indicates they would like their submission to be anonymous or confidential.

The NSW and Australian governments are also, in a separate process, inviting interested stakeholders to have their say on the future of Regional Forest Agreements in NSW. Further information can be found at: www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/have-your-say.

WHEN WILL THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD END?

Submissions must be received by the NSW EPA by **5pm on Friday 23 February 2018**.

Review of New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements

Combined second and third five-yearly review – 2004 to 2014

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD ENDS?

At the close of the public consultation period, any submissions received will be analysed by the Independent Reviewer. Further targeted consultation will be undertaken by the Independent Reviewer as required.

The Independent Reviewer will provide a report to both governments on the review of the RFAs, which includes an analysis of issues raised in the public submission process.

The Australian and NSW governments will prepare a joint response to the recommendations of the Independent Reviewer's report for public release in 2018.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWER?

The role of the Independent Reviewer will be to review the implementation of the NSW RFAs, including consideration of the Implementation Report, *A report on progress with implementation of the New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements: Second and third five-yearly reviews July 2004 – June 2014*, the results of monitoring of sustainability indicators and associated written public submissions, and to provide a report to the governments.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE REVIEW?

Information on the NSW RFAs and the RFA review is on the NSW EPA and Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources websites.

The NSW EPA website is: www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry/about-public-native-forestry/regional-forest-agreements-assessments/review-regional-forest-agreements.

The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website is: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/forestry/policies/rfa/regions/new-south-wales#combined-second-and-third-fiveyearly-review-20042014>.

WHERE CAN I GET THE IMPLEMENTATION REPORT?

The Implementation Report can be downloaded at: www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry/about-public-native-forestry/regional-forest-agreements-assessments/review-regional-forest-agreements.

To request a hard copy of the Implementation Report you can either send an email with your mailing address to the NSW EPA at: forestry.policy@epa.nsw.gov.au or phone 131 555 or (02) 9995 5555 (for outside NSW).



Review of New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements

Combined second and third five-yearly review – 2004 to 2014

RFA EXTENSION PROCESS

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE RFAS BEYOND AUGUST 2019?

The Australian and NSW governments are committed to an ongoing role for RFAs in NSW. On 21 November 2017, the NSW Government announced it has commenced negotiations with the Australian Government to extend the three NSW RFAs.

Detailed information on the extension process and how to have your say on the future of RFAs can be found at: www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/have-your-say/.