

From: Claire Bettington <campaigns@good.do>
Sent: Friday, 23 February 2018 12:59 PM
To: EPA RSD Forestry Strategic Regulation and Reform Mailbox
Cc: forests@industry.nsw.gov.au
Subject: Regional Forest Agreements review and extension

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the NSW Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs)

I am OPPOSED to the renewal of the RFAs.

RFAs are not a good model for forest management, rather they have proved to be a model for forest destruction.

This is in an era where we have so few forests left, and Climate Change in real! We need to store carbon in forests, not release more by cutting forests down and burning them. Trees are a really effective way to store carbon, but only if they are left to grow! Logging of native forests must stop – NOW!!

There are over 1000 threatened species and 100 threatened ecological communities in NSW alone!! This is an appalling statistic, and will be made worse by the loss of the habitat for many of these threatened species, many of which need mature forest with a range of foods and breeding hollows to reproduce and survive.

Why should RFAs allow the public native forest logging industry to be exempt from complying with the usual environmental impact assessments under Commonwealth environment laws? This is utterly outrageous in this day and age when, more than ever, we need our environmental protection laws to work. The RFAs must NOT be renewed for this reason alone. Logging in threatened species habitat forests must stop, NOW!! No compromise. So much has already been lost, so much destruction is utterly heartbreaking.

RFAs have failed miserably, the facts prove it:

- Taxpayers heavily subsidise logging industry operations – this is absolutely outrageous, always has been, and MUST STOP. We are practically paying loggers to destroy our forests when we desperately need the forests more than ever for the purpose of mitigating climate change.
- The animals and plants that depend on our forests are facing an extinction crisis, with many hundreds of forest species on the endangered and critically endangered list. Where do you think MORE logging will take these species? Further towards extinction perhaps???? A no-brainer.
- Koala numbers are declining catastrophically all over Australia. They will soon be extinct in NSW and QLD. How could we have come to this? Our iconic national unique and irreplaceable native marsupial Koalas? How could we have allowed this to happen? I am appalled and ashamed that our governments are not overseeing their survival and putting in place logging bans for all our remaining habitat forests, and creating special National Parks to protect them.
- We are losing hollow-bearing trees too at the rate of knots – they only form in 100-150 year old trees, but so very many of our beautiful unique birds and animals depend on the hollows for breeding nests. How are they going to survive if they cannot breed due to lack of hollows? Old growth forests must be protected NOW!! No more logging of old growth, and no more logging of the forests that will become old growth in the future. Think of the future for our forests, our animals, our birds, and for our children and grandchildren, who will say, “why didn’t you stop this madness?”
- Our forests provide “environmental services” to all human populations which although they are “unpriced” in the “market”, are actually priceless in the sense that WE CANNOT DO WITHOUT THEM. It is utter madness to chop down

forests that give us oxygen to breathe and water to drink. This is the basis of life, including that of us humans. If the government does not know this, it is time they learnt and acted to protect life in all its forms. To not do so is in my humble opinion CRIMINALLY NEGLIGENT.

- Absolutely no consideration has been given to ESD or Ecologically Sustainable Development in the operation of RFAs. It is about time ESD was given the prominence it should have, that is, ESD should be front and centre in all that we do. On this basis alone, RFAs should not be continued.

The process of reviewing RFAs is in my opinion a fake process. Nothing whatever can justify the continuation of such deplorable forest-destroying agreements as the RFAs, heavily weighted as they are in favour of the logging industry.

RFAs are taking us down the road to the utter destruction of our last remaining forests. What are we? A third world country? Where the forests are destroyed for financial gain of the few corrupt families, companies and officials at the expense of the livelihoods of thousands of ordinary people, and the loss of rich ecosystems to boot?

Scientific knowledge has advanced so much in the span of years of the RFAs that they can no longer be justified as a management tool. Climate Change is real, everyone accepts this now except a few nutters. Therefore it is imperative that we start to do something concrete about it, NOW! We only have a few years before Climate Change becomes irreversible. Why would we do this to ourselves and the planet? Forests are a big part of the solution to Climate Change due to their ability to rapidly absorb carbon from the atmosphere. NO MORE FORESTS MUST BE LOGGED OR DESTROYED, therefore THE RFAs MUST NOT BE RENEWED! It is a COMPLETE NO-BRAINER!

Polling shows that the people support protection for forests, therefore the government should do the will of the people and protect the forests. And stop pandering to the logging industry. NOW!

We need to create at least two new National Parks to protect the habitat of Koalas and Leadbeater's Possums: one for Koalas in Northern NSW to be named "The Great Koala NP"; and one in the Central Highlands of Victoria – "The Great Forest National Park" – not only to protect the State Faunal Symbol, Leadbeater's Possum (or "Fairy Possum"), but to protect other Gliders, Possums, birds, creatures and plants that are Critically Endangered or Endangered. We CANNOT let these species slide into extinction due to a small logging industry with extraordinary disproportionate power, which serves as a cover for the woodchip and biomass burning industries. What are we? Insane????

Think of the benefits of forests: clean water and oxygen as mentioned before; habitat for endangered species, also as mentioned before; health and well-being of people from activities such as forest walking, camping, other forms of non-destructive recreation – opportunities to be quiet, silent and to relax, listen to nature, watch nature. These are so important. And there is MONEY to be made from forests – nature-based tourism! Instead of subsidizing the destruction of the forests, which is a financial drain on all of society, preserve the forests and make MONEY from them at the same time – a total WIN-WIN situation, just on an economic basis alone. What's not to like?

I absolutely insist that the NSW and other State governments, and the Commonwealth government do the following:

- DO NOT renew the RFAs!! They have not worked for Conservation, only for logging companies to make profit.
- Listen to the people!
- Look at the evidence!
- Create National Parks for endangered species and Koalas to survive in all States.
- Create National Parks for future generations of people to enjoy.
- Create National Parks for mitigating Climate Change NOW!!
- Create National Parks and stop logging.
- Transition forest workers to other jobs/sectors. You know it makes sense.
- Resist the CFMEU on forest workers' jobs. They will happily go on logging until there are no forests left, so it has to stop at some point. Why not NOW??
- Withdraw the public subsidies to the logging industry. It is unviable economically, always has been.
- Act to stop the conflict over the forests by ending logging NOW!

I confirm that my submission does not contain sensitive information and can be published in full on the Environment Protection Authority and/or the Department of Primary Industries website. I understand that the Environment Protection Authority, Department of Primary Industries and/or the independent reviewer may contact me about my submission.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on RFAs. Yours sincerely,

Claire Bettington [REDACTED] New South Wales, [REDACTED]

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