

20 February 2018

The RFAs should not be renewed.

I have lived in North West NSW in Coonabarabran for over 40 years, both on a farm then in the township. I have used our native forests for my entire life and value them for recreation, for the water and carbon they help conserve, for the tourism opportunities they present and as places of refuge for our native species.

While this appears to be a review of the coastal RFAs, some of the lessons from management of The Pilliga are relevant.

The stated aim of RFAs was to facilitate multiple use of public native forests, conservation, timber extraction and recreation. To those aims in The Pilliga has been added allowing extractive industries such as coal seam gas extraction.

The Brigalow RFA **greatly overestimated the amount of timber** which would be available for extraction over the 20 year period of the agreement. This has resulted in the “mining” of existing timber reserves and pressure to convert areas dedicated to conservation into timber extraction. This has happened in coastal forests as well. It is unacceptable.

Opening The Pilliga up to extractive industries has in taken over from all other aims.

- **The public is excluded** from areas where gas extraction is going ahead, and even in these fairly early stages, the public who venture into these areas are followed and photographed by company employees. Recreation is impossible.
- Extensive tracts of natural bushland are being fragmented by additional roads, pipelines and well pads every 700 metres. There is increasing noise and light, traffic movements, weed and feral animal invasion. **Conservation values are lost** in this process.

These forests are public assets and as such should be managed for public good not the profits of large corporations.

Harvesting of native forests is not needed for timber production. Plantation timber should be used instead. Public access has health and economic benefits for the community.

Increasing decline in our valuable native animals can be reversed by ensuring that these large tracts of existing native forests are used to protect them.

RFAs should not be renewed. Instead we should take this opportunity to transition out of native forest logging on public land.

Yours faithfully

Jane Judd  
Convenor  
Friends of the Pilliga  
PO Box 420  
Coonabarabran NSW 2357