

NSW Regional Forest Agreements
DPI Forestry
Department of Primary Industries
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cc The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP

20 February 2018

RE: EXTENDING REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENTS (RFAs)

The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Greens object to the renewal of the Regional Forest Agreements on the following grounds:

1. **The RFAs must not be renewed.** The RFAs have failed to protect the environment, failed to result in a thriving timber industry and are driving climate change. The RFAs are therefore not a successful model for forest management.
2. **This public asset must be managed for the public good.** The progress report for the RFA review fails to provide any data to support the assertions that logging is conforming to ecologically sustainable forest management. In contrast, there is lots of evidence that forest wildlife is in decline, we know logging reduces carbon stores and water supplies and we know the majority of people support protecting forests.
3. **We can implement alternative models for forest management.** We can do better than industrially logging diverse, living ecosystems. Forests should facilitate increased human access for health and wellbeing, recreation and education. The Great Koala National Park proposal would help protect koalas and become a huge tourist attraction.
4. **Other values of forests must be considered.** Research in the Victorian Central Highlands shows that the value of water, carbon and tourism dwarf that of timber. Our Governments must consider all economic and social benefits from forests.
5. **The Government should use the end of the RFAs as the point at which it implements a just transition out of native forest logging on public land.**

Impacts on forest fauna

6. EPBC accreditation of logging operations has resulted in lower protection for forest species and has not been complied with, as demonstrated by the multitude of license breaches. Commonwealth oversight of forest management must be restored.
7. Data has not been provided to assess the proportion of each forest ecosystem protected or impacts on species.
8. The number of threatened forest species has continued to rise during the RFAs, with iconic species like koalas and gliders now either absent or experiencing population crashes in many parts of NSW. Logging is identified as a key threat to many forest species, often because of the impact logging has on key habitat features like hollow-bearing trees.
9. Logging kills forest animals and is therefore an important animal welfare issue.
10. Climate change was not considered as part of the RFAs. We should not continue logging when we know it reduces carbon stores of forests.

11. The RFAs removed public oversight of logging by excluding 'third parties' from taking legal action on logging breaches. This has resulted in a lack of accountability and transparency in their implementation.

Jobs and the economy

12. The NSW taxpayer has paid millions of dollars to buy-back non-existent timber because of over-estimated timber volumes by Forestry Corporation. This is one of a series of subsidies that the logging industry receives.

13. The logging industry is one of the most mechanised and most dangerous. The number of direct jobs in the industry has steadily declined and is now estimated as under 400 across NSW.

Alternative options for public native forests

14. We have other options besides logging. We should protect public native forests and use them to increase public access for health and economic benefits.

15. There are many forested areas in the three RFA regions that should be protected in the reserve network. For example, the forests of northern NSW are one of just 36 global Biodiversity Hotspots, there are forested areas across NSW that should be World Heritage, and there are outstanding wilderness.

16. Polling conducted in the north coast electorates of Ballina and Lismore in December 2017 showed that 90% of people support protecting forests for nature, water, carbon and recreation. Under 10% supported logging for timber, woodchips and biomass burning.

The consultation process

17. The NSW Government has already committed to extending the RFAs. This commitment was made prior to the review that is now being conducted. The review should be collating evidence to assess the performance of the RFAs with a view to making an evidence-based decision assessing whether they are an appropriate model for forest management.

18. The RFAs affect two million hectares of public property in NSW, and very few people are likely to have heard of RFAs. A concerted effort must be made to have genuine community consultation on the future of public native forests.

19. In order to be effective, an independent review must be undertaken in consultation with independent scientists, not just government agencies, and must undertake on-ground inspections of logging impacts with community groups.

20. The consultation process must be extended to allow for fair and equitable community input.


on behalf of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Greens