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22 February 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission – Review of regional forest agreements

I have reviewed the regional forest agreements and documentation on exhibition, and wish to make a submission.

Because significant changes have occurred since the regional forest agreements came into effect, the agreements should not be extended without additional review and some significant changes. For example:

1. An updated review of timber resources available should be undertaken, and the costs and benefits of continuing native forest logging. In many areas native forest logging is uneconomic and state owned forests have more productive economic uses such as catchment protection, nature conservation and tourism. This has been demonstrated in recent studies.
2. In recent years, important and iconic threatened species such as the Koala and Greater Glider have been recognised as threatened with extinction under the Commonwealth EPBC Act. Their conservation requirements were not considered adequately in the processes leading to the current regional forest agreements. These species are significantly affected by future logging in state forests, and the benefits of providing additional protected areas must form part of the review of the regional forest agreements.
3. Situations exist where the public interest requires that national park extensions should occur to improve park management boundaries and conservation security, and to promote more effective tourism and recreation and the associated socio-economic benefits.

A proposal made to the NSW Government to extend Barrington Tops National Park to consolidate the national park boundaries by including an isolated area of state forest in the Upper Paterson and Allyn River area should be able to be accommodated in any future agreements. This area of state forest is largely in informal protection under the existing agreement arrangements, and the level of security should be increased to national park status to protect the World Heritage values of the adjoining national park area. In addition, consolidation of park boundaries will reduce long term management costs, support the use of the area for tourism and recreation, and protect important Koala and Greater Glider habitats.

The review of the regional forest agreements should ensure that the matters identified above are fully considered, and incorporated in final arrangements between the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Yours sincerely

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