

21 February, 2018

Submission re: **Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs)**

I call on the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to ensure that the Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) are **NOT RENEWED**. Any renewal will continue the unacceptable industrial clear felling of forests. The RFAs have been a total disaster for Australia's native forests and wildlife. RFA's have literally smashed forests by clear felling them in coupes that are hundreds of hectare wide. They have decimated habitat, particularly for arboreal mammals that are dependent on mature native forests. They have exacerbated the threats to endangered ecological communities and threatened species. They have polluted drinking water and created soil erosion. They have exacerbated the crisis of climate change that will be catastrophic for not only Australia, but the planet. RFA's must end.

RFA's have been roundly condemned by the conservation movement as being a disaster for forest management. Publically owned state forests must now be protected as national parks and protected areas for recreation and education.

RFAs are unacceptable when there are over 1000 threatened species and 100 threatened ecological communities in NSW alone. RFAs cannot continue when Australia's carbon emissions are increasing with the climate crisis escalating with increases in the frequency and severity of extreme heat waves, floods, storms and wildfires. Forests are one of the most effective ways to capture and store carbon, so necessary for a safe climate.

I do not wish my taxes to prop up a failed forestry industry. I want them to support plantation forests established on cleared land.

In summary, the consequence of the RFAs have been:

- Populations of forest animals, including koalas, plummeting over the life of RFAs;
- Ecosystem processes in forests, like the carbon and water cycles, being disrupted, polluted and damaged;
- Loss of hollow-bearing trees, key to wildlife survival;
- Failed ecologically sustainable forest management;
- Forestry job numbers steadily declining & taxpayer subsidies keeping logging financially viable.

It is a disgrace that RFAs are exempted from complying with Commonwealth environment laws and can proceed with legal impunity. The recent proposals to 'harvest' native forests for wood chips for 'renewable energy' biofuels is an obscenity.

Forests are critical for human health and well being. It is time that Australia's publically owned State Forests be turned into areas of recreation, nature-based tourism, and education. Wood products can be sourced from sustainable plantations on cleared farmland.

RFAs are no longer appropriate in the 21st Century.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

Copy to:

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Mr Paul Fletcher, Federal Member for Bradfield