



Extending the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement

The Australian and Tasmanian governments have committed to establish a 20 year rolling extension to the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA). To inform this process, we are seeking your feedback.

Stakeholders have had an initial opportunity to provide feedback (from 17 April to 12 June 2015) about extending the Tasmanian RFA, as part of the third five-yearly review of the RFA. This initial feedback, and the Independent Reviewer's report to the third five-yearly review of the Tasmanian RFA, has informed the focus of this additional consultation.

The governments will consider any practical improvements to the Tasmanian RFA, to ensure it remains effective and credible in the long term. While the governments are not negotiating a new RFA, or changing the Agreement's fundamental objectives, they have identified the following improvements to the RFA framework:

- **Streamlined and strengthened review and reporting arrangements** – presently the five yearly reviews examine the implementation of the RFA clause-by-clause. The improved review and reporting arrangements will be outcomes focused.
- **Improved and contemporary dispute resolution mechanisms** – these will give the governments more options for resolving issues about the implementation of the RFA.
- **Improved communication and consultation** – the governments will hold annual officials level bilateral meetings, in the interim years between five-yearly reviews, to discuss issues relating to the ongoing implementation of the RFA.
- **Modernisation of the RFA** – where practicable, the governments will update references to superseded legislation and policy.

The Tasmanian RFA is the governments' policy framework for delivering sustainable forest management in Tasmania. In extending the Tasmanian RFA, the governments will maintain the Agreement's key objectives:

- certainty of resource access and supply to Tasmania's forestry industry
- ecologically sustainable forest management and use of Tasmania's productive forests, and
- a Comprehensive Adequate and Representative reserve system.

Have your say

Please complete the questionnaire and:

- Hand in while visiting a drop-in centre

Monday 5 December 2016, 4.00–7.30pm at Peach & Plum Rooms – Huon LINC, 1 Skinner Drive, Huonville

Wednesday 7 December 2016, 4.00–7.30pm at Wellers Inn, 36 Queen Street, Burnie

Thursday 8 December 2016, 4.00–7.30pm at The LINC, 51 King Street, Scottsdale

- Or, email your completed response to: reviewrfa@stategrowth.tas.gov.au.

Consultation closes **12.30pm AEDT, Friday, 23 December 2016**. Questionnaires received after this time may not be accepted.

Your details

Given name

Family name

Organisation

Mobile phone

Email

Please select one of the following

- I confirm that my completed questionnaire does not contain sensitive information and can be published in full on the Department of State Growth website.
- My completed questionnaire should **NOT** be published on the Department of State Growth website.

Privacy Notice

You are providing personal information to the Tasmanian Department of State Growth (the Department), which will manage that information in accordance with the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*. The personal information collected here will be used by the Department for the purpose of receiving and verifying contact details for stakeholders who have chosen to submit a completed questionnaire on the extension to the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement. Failure to provide this information may result in the non-acceptance of your questionnaire or records not being properly maintained. The Department may also use the information for related purposes, or disclose it to third parties, including the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, in circumstances allowed for by law. You have the right to access your personal information by request to the Department and you may be charged a fee for this service.

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In providing a completed questionnaire, you agree that:

- unless you indicate otherwise below (or as otherwise determined by the Department), your questionnaire will be published on the Department's website and will remain on the Department's website indefinitely
- the Department can contact you about your questionnaire
- for published questionnaires from individuals, your name will be published with your questionnaire. All other contact details will be removed from your questionnaire
- for published questionnaires from organisations, your name and your organisation's details will be published with your questionnaire.

Please select your interest/s with extending the RFA

Forest management system

Resource certainty

Research and development

Threatened species

Comprehensive Adequate and Representative reserve system

Heritage values

Socio-economic data

Value of industry

Employment figures

Other interests (please list)

Your feedback

Please list any publicly available non-government documents, reports or data that the Australian and Tasmanian governments could consider in extending the Tasmanian RFA, and that have not already been provided to the governments through the third five-yearly RFA review, or by other means?

Where applicable, please list the publication title, date, author and url.

What improvements could be made to the five-yearly RFA review process to make it more outcomes focused?

What research and development priorities are important to Tasmanian forestry industry stakeholders?

What socio-economic data and analysis is important to Tasmanian forest industry stakeholders?

How could the governments improve outcomes-focused monitoring and reporting on threatened species and biodiversity, as part of extending the Tasmanian RFA?

What other improvements could be made to the RFA framework?

Tom Kingston

Other interests (please list)

The RFA, announced by Wilson Tuckey in 2001, was designed by industry for the benefit of industry to lock in industrial scale logging. Time has demonstrated that this is exactly what it has done. Continuing with this model will mean more of the same – high volume/low value production; increased volumes and decreased jobs; increased government subsidies with no incentive to transition to a high value industry. If the RFA is renewed we will continue to export huge volumes of unprocessed material and even get the stage where we will burn native forest in furnaces for energy because we cannot gain internationally recognised certification for our timber.

The forestry industry in Tasmania is in crisis, propped up by massive amounts of tax payer funds while exacting a huge environmental and social cost. Native forests are being sacrificed at the very time they should be protected for what they do best – protect biodiversity and ecosystems, provide fire resistant barriers, sequester carbon, produce clean water, moderate water flows and be maintained as special places for people to appreciate and to provide jobs in tourism and other non-extractive forest uses like bee keeping.

Over the past 20 years, the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement has resoundingly failed to achieve either of its dual aims of protecting biodiversity or securing a sustainable forest industry. The Agreement expires in 2017.

The Chairman of Forestry Tasmania, Rob de Fegely wrote a 7 page letter to Tasmanian Ministers Gutwein and Bartlett on 29.9.16 which is now in public circulation. It contains a thoroughly pessimistic assessment of the current and future economic viability of FT.

In addition to significantly increased risk of both resource and habitat scarcity, as a result of the first 20 years of this Agreement, and now with climate change, the RFA is even less likely to deliver on its aims.

Yet in a totally inadequate December 2016 consultation, officers of your Dept of Agriculture and the Tasmanian Dept of State Growth issued a document stating that both governments “have committed to establish a 20 year rolling extension to the TAS RFA”.

Simply locking in both economically and environmentally destructive behaviour for a further 20 years would be a disaster.

Only with a commitment to obtain both Forest Stewardship Council certification and a social licence for its operations, can FT move ahead.

What improvements could be made to the five-yearly RFA review process to make it more outcomes focused?

The review should ensure truth in reporting. Anecdotal evidence does not always support the information that is contained in reports that are provided by the forest industry stakeholders for public consumption. The review should be given more assets and power to investigate outcomes.

The review should include:

- Comprehensive financial analysis stating the truthful dollar outcomes in terms of actual costs and returns to the Tasmanian taxpayers. This should be a simply stated and understandable outcome, not hidden in softened financial riddles that are meaningless. For example, the following might be considered:
 - How has the RFA contributed to the economy and what did it cost the taxpayer to achieve this contribution?
 - What is the benefit in long term considerations (jobs, local region economies) of clear felling native and old growth forests for a gain of local jobs?
 - What might be the value (that would be lost if clear felled) of retaining native and old growth forests to help promote the image of Tasmania's intrinsic beauty and wilderness? This is highlighted in places where tourists often travel such as the Tarkine, Blue Tiers and the Styx/Weld regions.
 - Have carbon values been considered?
- Where have value -added outcomes been achieved? For example, the RFA should review the practice of shipping whole logs overseas instead of processing them here in Tasmanian sawmills.
- How have alternate forest industries been affected, such as the beekeeping industry for leatherwood honey.
- What is the effect on Climate Change with the continued harvesting of forests? The review might undertake to investigate atmospheric carbon removal and the benefits of not harvesting.
- What actions were taken to value add to the timber resource?
- What quantities of specialty timbers were wasted in coupes that were clear felled?

What research and development priorities are important to Tasmanian forestry industry stakeholders?

- The effects on the environment of:
 - o Residue burning
 - o Use of poisons including pesticides and herbicides
- The effect on the environment of the loss of habitat for local and migrating species

What socio-economic data and analysis is important to Tasmanian forest industry stakeholders?

Truth in the data presented is vital. The review should be empowered to investigate and determine its own outcomes, rather than be dependent upon the information fed to it by the government.

- What is the socio-economic effect of clear felling and other logging operations on communities, not only counted in the jobs provided but also the quality of life as affected by the operations on the community, jobs lost and other socio-economic opportunities missed?
- What is the loss of habitat because of the forestry operations for threatened species and how is that managed?
- Profits to industry stakeholders. How are financial benefits distributed? Who makes the money? Are the contractors being squeezed as they have in the past?

How could the governments improve outcomes-focused monitoring and reporting on threatened species and biodiversity, as part of extending the Tasmanian RFA?

- It is imperative that the RFA be subject to the EPBC Act. Only then will the forestry operations have a chance of being accountable, provided there is a commitment to truth in reporting

What other improvements could be made to the RFA framework?

- There should be a public review of the RFA framework itself to ascertain if the framework remains a suitable vehicle for the management of Tasmania's forests. The public review, in considering the RFA or a possible alternate framework, may have as an aim, the achievement of a social license for the conduct of forestry practices.
- The RFA must be brought up to date with modern forestry practices which emphasize sustainable management. Quite obviously clear felling of native forest is not sustainable. Any future RFA or its replacement should concentrate on high value product, not low value wood chip.
- The RFA must never be considered in isolation. There has not been sufficient consideration of the effect of the RFA on other aspects of Tasmanian life, including other industries such as tourism, fishing, adventure tourism, not to mention Tasmania's image.