



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- **Modernisation of the RFA** – where practicable, the governments will update references to superseded legislation and policy.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.

2791_1116

Your details

Michael Buky
Alison Bleaney
Tim Thorne

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)

Water quality

Tourism

Selective logging

Your feedback

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?

Our submission centres on the process of honest and transparent auditing as this is the core of a profitable, sustainable, transparent and socially acceptable forestry business.

We submit that an independent auditing authority be instituted. This authority should aim to audit a minimum of 10 per cent of logging coupes on an annual rotating basis. The process of auditing and what, where and when auditing should take place would be decided by the independent authority. The independent auditor would provide an annual report and be jointly funded by a mix of Federal, State and industry.

In order to improve the sustainability and profitability of forestry, auditing should begin in the coupe planning stage and feed into FPPs. The logic for this would be to ensure that a proposed coupe is profitable having taken into account all factors including related costs and potential sales. While this would not provide a precise figure, it would enable a realistic assessment of proposed profitability that has hitherto been lacking. If a coupe is estimated not to be profitable, logging of this coupe should not occur.

Post-logging auditing will not only examine compliance with the FPP, but will also assist in the refinement of the pre-logging auditing model, thus further improving sustainability and potential profitability.

Independent post-logging auditing for compliance will also enhance the complaints procedure and reduce the unacceptably long period between complaint and potential resolution. If auditing has not occurred on a coupe where a complaint has been received, an immediate audit should take place to assist in the resolution process.

A comprehensive, transparent and timely response to complaints is essential to ensuring any social licence that is an essential part of FSC or any other certification approval.

Another improvement to the RFA is open access to all forestry data. To date, individual coupe profitability data has not been released, let alone any pre-logging coupe data. It is axiomatic that the independent auditor has access to all forestry data in order to provide the best modelling possible.

A strong and independent auditing authority would enhance all aspects of forestry operations, however contentious they may be. Renewed confidence in forestry operations by those who work in the industry, those who have environmental concerns as well as communities and affected catchments would be the result. Gaining an honest social licence is essential for engaging communities and allowing trust in the business of forestry.