

REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT
for the
SOUTHERN REGION
of
NEW SOUTH WALES

*Progress on the implementation of the
Regional Forest Agreement for the Southern Region*

24 April 2001 – 30 June 2002

ANNUAL REPORT

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Introduction

Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) are separate Agreements between the Australian Government and the State Governments of NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia. Based on good science and extensive consultation, the Agreements set out broad strategies to achieve a balance between conservation and a sustainable and competitive forest industry. The Agreements are in place for 20 years.

In NSW there are three RFAs in place covering the North East, Eden and Southern regions. The Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard MP and the Premier of NSW, the Hon Bob Carr MP, signed the Southern RFA on 24 April 2001.

The RFAs are subject to annual reporting during the first four years and thereafter five-yearly reviews, to report progress against milestones and recommend remedial action where necessary. Progress reporting by the Australian and NSW Governments (the Parties) on the implementation of the NSW RFAs has been aligned to a financial year basis, being the period 1 July to 30 June each year.

This is the first Southern annual report providing details in the achievement of milestones for the period 24 April 2001 to 30 June 2002. The extended reporting period is to align reporting for the Southern region to reporting arrangements established for the other two NSW RFAs.

The implementation of the RFA for the Southern region has been greatly assisted by the completion of tasks required by RFAs for the Northeast and Eden regions. Numerous generic undertakings had either been developed prior to, or were well progressed at the time the Southern RFA was signed. These efficiencies have ensured that implementation of most of this RFA's milestones have been met on schedule.

Progress on Milestones

Note: References to NSW government agencies are as they were established at 30 June 2002.

Clause	Action	Timeline	Implementation
6	The Parties to determine the process for extending the Agreement for a further period.	As part of the third five-yearly review	Not required until the third five-yearly review.
34	NSW will have in place a Forest Agreement covering the Southern region and grant an Integrated Forestry Operations Approval applying to the Southern region.	30 June 2001	The Forest Agreement for the Southern Region was signed by the NSW Ministers for Planning, the Environment, Forestry and Fisheries on 3 May 2002.
37	Parties to report annually on the achievement of milestones in this Agreement.	Annually for the first five years	This is the first annual report, covering the period from 24 April 2001 to 30 June 2002. The extended reporting period is to align reporting for the Southern region with that for existing RFAs and NSW Forest Agreements. All future reporting will cover the period 1 July to 30 June.
40	The Parties to determine the mechanism for the five-year review.	Before the end of the five-year review period	Milestone not yet required.
41	Commonwealth will table the signed RFA in the Commonwealth Parliament.	Following signature	The RFA for the Southern Region was tabled in both Houses of the Federal Parliament on 20 June 2002.
41	Commonwealth will table in the Commonwealth Parliament the annual reports of achievement of milestones for the first four years.	Annually	This is the first annual report for the Southern Region and will be tabled once finalised.
41	Commonwealth will table in the Commonwealth Parliament the first five yearly review on performance against milestones and commitments.	Following first five yearly review	Not required until completion of the first five year review.
47 (c)	NSW to complete and publish plans of management for areas dedicated under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> (NSW).	31 January 2006	There are 114 national parks, nature reserves, state recreation areas, historic sites and Aboriginal sites in the Southern region which require plans of management to be prepared. At 30 June 2002, the NSW Minister for the Environment had adopted 19 plans of management (including one which was being revised). A further 28 plans were in preparation. Preparation of the remaining 67 plans of management had not yet begun. Plans of management can be viewed on the NPWS website: http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au .
47 (d)	NSW to complete and publish Regional ESFM Plans for State forests.	31 December 2001	Draft Regional Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management (ESFM) Plans have been completed. Finalisation of the model management plans will occur following the conclusion of discussions between NSW State agencies.

Clause	Action	Timeline	Implementation
47 (e)	NSW to implement the Forest Management Zoning system for the Southern region.	31 December 2001	<p>The 'Forest Management Zoning (FMZ) System' for State forests was publicly announced in March 1999 with the release of the document entitled <i>Managing Our Forests Sustainably: Forest Management Zoning in NSW State Forests</i>.</p> <p>The FMZ system defined in the above document is to be applied to the Southern region, consistent with existing RFA regions.</p> <p>The FMZ system will be implemented in conjunction with the Regional ESFM Plans when finalised.</p>
47 (g)	NSW to implement the review and monitoring processes and develop the strategic and operational requirements of Sustainable Yield systems and processes to enable a review of Sustainable Yield.	1 December 2006	State Forests of New South Wales (SFNSW) are finalising an approach, including pre and post harvest assessment and growth and other model refinement. The approach will be discussed with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), PlanningNSW, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and stakeholders to develop a Forest Resource and Management Evaluation System (FRAMES) implementation strategy.
47 (h)	NSW to develop and implement environmental management systems.	30 April 2004	<p>Development of an environmental management system (EMS) at NPWS is being progressively developed and is on schedule for completion by 2004.</p> <p>The development of the NPWS EMS during 2001/2002 included expanding the system to cover all areas of NPWS operations. This development included trials of components of the system. The <i>State of the Parks</i> report will comprise one component of the system [refer Att 6 Point 1(o)].</p> <p>SFNSW is developing an EMS to assist in continuous improvement in environmental management in native and planted forests. The EMS will be a comprehensive planning, assessment, implementation, monitoring, auditing and reporting system which details how SFNSW is implementing ESFM on its native and planted forest estate.</p> <p>Following the public display of the Native Forest Strategic Framework in September 2000 and a 'gap analysis' by an external ISO 14001 certification company, the Native Forest Environmental Management System (NFEMS) was rolled out to all Native Forests regions. Simulated (training) EMS audits followed with audit outcomes used to focus further development work (continuous improvement) of the NFEMS. Development is continuing with an objective of obtaining ISO 14001 Certification.</p>
50	NSW to report on compliance of the <i>Integrated Forestry Operations Approval</i> applying to the Southern region and furnish the Commonwealth with a copy of these reports.	Annually	<p>The Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (IFOA) for the Southern Region commenced on 13 May 2002.</p> <p>The first report on compliance with the Approval for the Southern region is to be included in the NSW Forest Agreement Annual Report for the 2002/2003 period.</p>
52(d)	Both Parties to further develop, review, and if necessary revise Sustainability Indicators.	In time for the first five-yearly review	<p>Sustainability indicators (ESFM criteria and indicators) referred to in Clause 48 of the Southern RFA and described in Table 1 and Attachment 7 of the NSW Forest Agreement for the Southern Region were developed consistent with the Montreal Process criteria.</p> <p>Monitoring of the sustainability indicators began following the implementation of the NSW Forest Agreement for the region in May 2002.</p>

Clause	Action	Timeline	Implementation
56	NSW to produce a code of practice for Timber Harvesting of native forest on Private Lands.	By the first five-yearly review	<p>The 'Interim Best Operating Standards for Harvesting of Private Native Forestry', under the <i>Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997</i> were released in June 2001. The Standards replace existing draft Best Management Principles and other standards used by vegetation officers. The Standards were prepared to guide forestry operations on private land requiring consent.</p> <p>In April 2002, a Private Native Forestry Reference Group was established to examine the regulation of forestry on private lands and make recommendations for a workable exemption and consent framework.</p>
57	NSW to complete Code of Practice for Plantations on Private Land.	30 June 2001	The <i>Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999</i> and Code of Practice came into effect in December 2001. The Act and Code are subject to review in 2004.
98	NSW to establish a Research Liaison Committee and publish a list of research priorities.	30 September 2001	<p>The Committee was formed in October 2000 under the North East and Eden RFAs. The Committee held its first meeting in November 2000 and includes representatives from NPWS, the Department of Land and Water Conservation, PlanningNSW and SFNSW.</p> <p>At 30 June 2002, representatives were identifying current research being undertaken by their agency and other non-government groups and universities.</p> <p>A list of research priorities is to be included in the Compendium [refer milestone under clause 100].</p>
100	NSW to prepare a Compendium of New South Wales Forest Research.	By the first five-yearly review	Development of the Compendium is underway by PlanningNSW for completion by the end of 2004.
103	NSW and the Commonwealth to lodge archival copies of data.	30 June 2001	<p>Data archive in progress.</p> <p>Completion of this milestone was delayed due to technical difficulties.</p>
Att 1 Point 4	NSW to prepare Plans of Management for Crown Reserves.	31 January 2006	<p>At 30 June 2002, preparation of plans of management for Crown Reserves had been deferred, pending the completion of negotiations between NSW State agencies over the potential transfer of all Crown Reserves to State Conservation Areas. Such a transfer will avoid duplication of land use categories and solve some of the management anomalies that currently exist with Crown Reserves.</p> <p>A Memorandum of Understanding regarding the management of Crown Reserves was signed on 26 March 2001 between the Directors-General of NPWS and the Department of Mineral Resources.</p>
Att 1 Point 5	NSW will finalise boundaries of CAR reserve with the exception of the Forest Management Zoning System.	30 June 2001	Boundaries established by the <i>National Park Estate (Southern Reservations) Act 2001</i> have been finalised.
Att 1 Point 5	NSW will finalise the Forest Management Zoning System.	31 December 2001	Refer to milestone under clause 47(e).

Clause	Action	Timeline	Implementation
Att 1 Point 8	NSW to establish all Dedicated Reserve components of the CAR Reserve System.	30 June 2001	All dedicated reserve components were established with the passage of the <i>National Park Estate (Southern Region Reservations) Act 2001</i> . Resolution of those lands marked as "Proposed Reserve, boundaries to be finalised" in the RFA awaits determination of Aboriginal land claims. The passage of the Act established seven new flora reserves on State forest. These areas are in addition to flora reserves already established.
Att 1 Point 8	NSW to establish all Informal Reserve components of the CAR Reserve System.	31 December 2001	All informal reserve components were established with the passage of the <i>National Park Estate (Southern Region Reservations) Act 2001</i> . Resolution of those lands marked as "Proposed Reserve, boundaries to be finalised" in the RFA, for the most part, awaits determination of Aboriginal land claims.
Att 3 point 4	NSW will complete the Threat Abatement Plan for the European Red Fox.	31 December 2001	The draft plan was publicly exhibited in July 2001. The plan was approved by the NSW Minister for the Environment in December 2001.
Att 3 Table 1	NSW to develop Recovery Plans for species listed in Table 1.	Within five years of signing	The preparation of recovery plans is being undertaken progressively. At 30 June 2002, of the 121 recovery plans specifically listed as State responsibilities in the RFA, seven plans had been approved, one draft plan had been publicly exhibited, 13 plans had drafts completed, 40 were in preparation and a further 19 were at the initial planning stage. Preparation of the remaining 41 plans had not yet begun.
Att 4 Point 14	NSW will identify and assess cultural heritage values in areas excluded from CRA assessments.	31 December 2001	During 2001/2002 an assessment of cultural heritage values was being conducted in the Goulburn Sub-region as part of a process to recommend appropriate management and use of public lands in the sub-region. This process is a NSW-based process coordinated by an inter-agency working group. Recommendations made to the NSW Minister for Planning at the end of 2002.
Att 6 Point 1(o)	NSW to publish a State of the Parks report.	31 August 2001	The first <i>State of the Parks</i> report was released in November 2001. The Report provided an overview of the conservation values of NSW and their management within the parks system. This was supported by a series of 'case studies' for parks around the State. Indicators are being developed by which NPWS management effectiveness will be reported in future <i>State of the Parks</i> reports. The next Report is due for release in December 2004. The 2001 <i>State of the Parks</i> report can be viewed on the NPWS website: www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/State+of+the+Parks+2001
Att 6 Point 2(b)	NSW will publish Eco Field Guides for Southern region.	31 December 2001	Preparation of a draft Eco Field Guide for the Southern region is underway.
Att 6 Point 2(c)	NSW to document the basis for silvicultural practices and publish the <i>Native Forest Silviculture Manual</i> (SFNSW).	31 March 2001	SFNSW published a <i>Native Forest Silviculture Manual</i> in September 2000. The Manual complements its field guides and training programs. The Manual documents the basis for SFNSW's silvicultural practices and contains the silvicultural specifications and guidelines required by the NSW Forest Agreements and IFOAs.

Clause	Action	Timeline	Implementation
Att 6 Point 2(d)	NSW to document and publish a description of the NSW Forest Management System covering Public and Private Lands.	In time for the first five-yearly review	The approach will build on and update the overviews on the responsible agencies contained in the Comprehensive Regional Assessment (CRA) ESFM report entitled <i>Description of Management Systems and Processes for Achieving Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management in NSW</i> .
Att 6 Point 2(e)	NSW to publish a description of the methods and results of calculating Sustainable Yield on Public Land.	1 December 2006	Milestone not yet due but is under development.
Att 6 Point 2(e)	NSW to publish independent audits of Sustainable Yield as outlined in Attachment 8.	For the second and subsequent five-yearly reviews	Milestone not due until the second five year review.
Att 6 Point 2(f)	NSW will produce annual reports of progress for meeting targets in regional ESFM plans.	Annually	Reporting will commence following the full implementation of the Regional ESFM Plans. [refer also to milestone 47(d)]
Att 6 Point 2(g)	NSW will report on the Forest Agreement covering the Southern region and on compliance with the IFOA applying to the Southern region	Annually	The first report on the implementation of the Southern Forest Agreement and compliance with the IFOA for the Southern Region will be prepared for 2002/2003. [refer also to milestone 50]
Att 6 Point 2(h)	NSW to table in each House of Parliament an annual report on the New South Wales <i>Southern Region Forest Agreement</i> in accordance with the <i>Forestry and National Park Estate Act 1998</i> (NSW) which will include an ESFM report and the outcomes of compliance with any Integrated Forestry Operations Approval for the regions.	Annually	The first implementation report covering the Southern region is to occur in 2002/2003.
Att 8 Point 2(b)	NSW NPWS will develop an Environmental Management System for lands dedicated under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> .	30 April 2004	Refer to Clause 47(h).
Att 8 Point 2(c)	SFNSW to develop a Native Forest Management System as an Environmental Management System.	30 April 2001	Refer to Clause 47(h).
Att 8 Point 2(l)	NSW to incorporate provisions that address in an integrated fashion bush and other fires within Regional ESFM Plans and plans of management for areas dedicated under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> (NSW).	By the first five-yearly review	Addressed through District Fire Committees under <i>Rural Fires Act 1997</i> where consideration of these values is undertaken prior to finalisation of District Hazard Reduction Plans. Bushfire management is also addressed through NPWS plans of management. ESFM principles are also being incorporated into bushfire risk management plans.

Clause	Action	Timeline	Implementation
Att 8 Point 2(m)	NSW to incorporate within the Regional ESFM Plans and Plans of Management under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> (NSW) integrated feral animal and weed control programs.	By the first five-yearly review.	<p>The development of model (strategic) management plans for weed, feral and introduced predators were underway in conjunction with discussions with NSW regulatory agencies.</p> <p>Feral animal and weed control programs are integrated into NPWS plans of management, recovery plans and threat abatement plans. Refer to specific milestones regarding the preparation of these plans.</p> <p>[refer also milestones 47(c) and Att 3 Table 1]</p>
Att 8 Point 2(n)	NSW to establish a process, including public reporting, for regular audits of compliance and reviews of Codes of Practice, Eco-Field Guides and Regional Prescriptions.	31 December 2002	<p>An overview of the process was included in the SFNSW draft NFMS which was displayed for public comment in September 2000, and will be finalised as part of the EMS. [refer also milestone 47(h)]</p> <p>A comprehensive set of procedures and guidelines were endorsed by NPWS in March 2002. The procedures and guidelines, in handbook form, were designed for NPWS officers carrying out compliance audit and enforcement activities. The guidelines are now applied across the NPWS to ensure a consistent standard. These procedures cover proactive auditing as well as reactive investigations in response to allegations of contraventions made by the public. They set out guidelines for planning a targeted proactive audit, responding to external complaints, communicating within the NPWS and with SFNSW, carrying out an investigation, analysing data and preparing an audit report, and making and carrying out enforcement decisions.</p> <p>The EPA has developed an active audit program of SFNSW' forestry operations to determine compliance with licence conditions. The audit program ensures that SFNSW is taking the required measures to protect the aquatic environment through responsible planning and operational activities. Non-compliance with conditions of the licence are dealt with through meetings with senior SFNSW officers, issuing feedback or warning letters, clean-up notices, penalty notices or prosecution action as appropriate to the circumstances.</p> <p>Focused threatened species compliance activities in relation to forestry operations are carried out by NSW Fisheries opportunistically where they coincide with other NSW Fisheries compliance duties. NSW Fisheries investigates complaints are received.</p>
Att 8 Point 2(n)	NSW to undertake audits as described above.	By the first and subsequent five-yearly reviews of the Agreement	The IFOA for the Southern Region commenced on 13 May 2002. Audits on compliance with the terms of the IFOA are to be undertaken during 2002/2003.
Att 8 Point 5	SFNSW will publish all FRAMES CRA reports for the Southern region.	30 September 2001	All FRAMES CRA reports for the Southern region have been completed. The reports are available on CD on request from the Resource and Conservation Division, PlanningNSW.

Clause	Action	Timeline	Implementation
Att 8 Point 6(b)	NSW will develop a model to predict recruitment and maintenance of habitat trees.	By end 2010	Under development.
Att 8 Point 6 (d)	Report production of all timber products.	Annually	To be included in the 2002/2003 NSW Forest Agreement Annual Report.
Att 8 Point 6(e)	Undertake additional FRAMES plot inventory measurements.	By the first five yearly review.	Additional plot establishment in South Coast Sub-region has been delayed until other preparatory FRAMES work is completed. Planning for additional plot measurement in Tumut Sub-region is underway.
Att 8 Point 6(f)	Monitor FRAMES performance through comparison of actual versus predicted volumes.	Annually	To be included in 2002/2003 NSW Forest Agreement Annual Report.
Att 8 Point 7	NSW will establish and implement an ongoing FRAMES development program.	1 December 2006	Under development.
Att 8 Point 8	NSW agrees to commission and publish an independent review of the enhanced FRAMES systems and processes applying to both the South Coast and Tumut sub regions.	1 December 2006	Milestone not due until 2006.
Att 11 Point 7	NSW will have long term wood supply contracts in place for South Coast and Tumut.	By 1 January 2001 and 1 January 2002 respectively	Agreement on South Coast Sub-region customer contracts has been delayed pending the renegotiation of contract conditions relating to the economics of future harvesting. This has arisen from the collapse of a proposed charcoal market, which would have utilised waste wood from sawlogging.

Acronyms

CAR reserve system	Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative reserve system
CRA	Comprehensive Regional Assessment
EMS	Environmental Management System
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
ESFM	Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management
FMZ	Forest Management Zone
FRAMES	Forest Resource and Management Evaluation System
IFOA	Integrated Forestry Operations Approval
NFEMS	Native Forest Environmental Management System
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
RFA	Regional Forest Agreement
SFNSW	State Forests of NSW