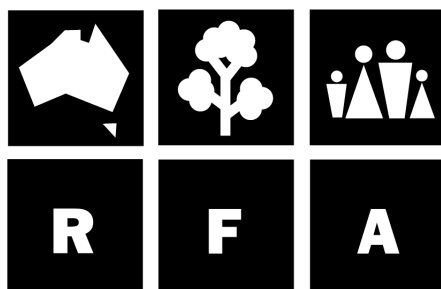


# CRA FOREST NEWS



**Regional Forest Agreements**  
Creating Jobs, Protecting Forests

**No. 5 August 1997**

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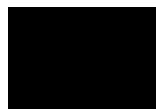
**State Progress Reports**

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**Forests Taskforce**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

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The information in this newsletter reports progress on completing RFAs and relevant forest issues. It does not represent the views of the Commonwealth or State Governments.

## **CRA FOREST NEWS**

**Welcome to the fifth edition of the CRA FOREST NEWS, the newsletter of the Forests Taskforce in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.**

**With the Tasmanian RFA expected to be completed any day now, we are planning a special edition on the outcomes of the RFA and its significance for the national process. In the meantime, this edition of CRA Forest News brings you up to date with progress in other States, news from the recent Earth Summit in New York, a report on the JANIS paper, some RFA publications and education tools produced by the Commonwealth, and the latest Community Coordinator Profile. There have also been some changes in personnel at the Forests Taskforce.**

### **STATE PROGRESS REPORTS**

#### **VICTORIA**

##### **CRA Report released for Central Highlands**

**A** broad range of interested groups and individuals took part in public meetings in the Central Highlands at the end of July as the RFA process moves into its next phase. The meetings followed the release of the Comprehensive Regional Assessment on July 7. A second round of public meetings was held in mid August in Healesville, Alexandra and Warragul.

The joint Commonwealth/State RFA Steering Committee is keen to hear from people who may have been unable to attend the meetings but are interested in the RFA process for the region.

The public input, along with the major body of research and data collected for the assessment will be used to develop a discussion paper for release during September 1997.

The paper will be available for an eight week consultation period before governments finalise the RFA for the region later in the year.

**T**he Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill took the opportunity of the parliamentary recess to visit the region and discuss the aims and objectives of the RFA with local conservation, forestry, local government, tourism and timber industry representatives.

His visit included a field trip to a forest reserve and logging coupe, as well as an inspection of Gould's mill in Alexandra.

##### **Public meetings in the North East**

**T**he first projects for the Comprehensive Regional Assessment of the North East region are up and running, and public meetings are

planned at the end of August to explain what they're about and how the local community can be involved in the RFA process.

The public meetings will at the following times and places:

### **CORRYONG**

**7.30pm, August 26th**

Sporting Complex, Strezleckiway, Corryong.

### **MYRTLEFORD**

**7.30pm, August 27th**

Function Room, Savoy Club, Ovens Highway

### **MANSFIELD**

**7.30pm, August 28th**

Delatite Meeting Room, 33 Highett Street, Mansfield.

The CRA projects already under way in the North East include various flora and fauna surveys as well as the cultural heritage assessment, which kicked off with Community Heritage Workshops during July.

The Community Heritage workshops were held in Bright, Mansfield, Mt Beauty, Corryong, Tallangatta and Wodonga. They were the first assessment project to involve the local community with about 150 people attending from community and local stakeholder groups, ranging from mountain cattlemen, historical societies, landcare, environment societies and the CWA to recreation groups, industry organisations and local and state government. The workshops inspired local school children to draw pictures of

places they felt were special, like swimming holes.

Over 600 places were identified for their heritage importance, some of them well known, others more unusual. All the information gathered at the workshops will be returned to the local people as an Inventory of Heritage Places.

Activity is also stepping up in the environment, economic and social assessments over the coming months.

The North East RFA is expected to be completed in mid-1998.

### **East Gippsland RFA unaffected by forest protest**

The Commonwealth and State governments have reassured the people of East Gippsland that recent protests against harvesting in the Goolengook forest block will not affect the success and durability of Australia's first RFA.

Ministers Hill and Anderson have restated the Commonwealth's commitment to a balanced approach to our forests, and hailed the East Gippsland RFA as an outstanding environmental result. Under the RFA, half the region is included within the reserve system and all the nationally agreed criteria for forest conservation are met, and in many cases exceeded.

"The simple fact of the matter is that the protesters in East Gippsland don't believe that we should be logging native forests at all," the Ministers said. "While they are entitled to that view, it is

not one shared by the Howard-Fischer

government or most Australians.”

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Forest Forums

Local representatives are now fully involved in the RFA process in four RFA regions through Regional Forest Forums.

Established as a direct channel of communication between the community and the State/Commonwealth steering committee, the forums meet regularly and are made up of regional community representatives with a stake in the future of the forests.

Nominations for representatives in each region were sought from over 20 peak groups.

The chairs of the Regional Forest Forums are:

Upper North East: Councillor Max Boyd

Lower North East: Councillor Leslie Brown

Southern: Professor Peter Kanowski

Eden: Mr Kerry Pfeiffer

### Surprises in Flora and Fauna Surveys

Scientists working on flora and fauna surveys for NSW Comprehensive Regional Assessments have made some exciting discoveries, including a plant previously thought to be extinct.

Two Lismore Muttonwood plants have been discovered in the forests between Bulahdelah and the Queensland border. The species has been recorded only once in the last 50 years. The North East flora surveys have also rediscovered a native vine (*Tylophora woollsi*), whose last known population was destroyed, and an unidentifiable stringybark which may be a new species. Meanwhile, the fauna survey team has found new locations of the little known Green-thighed frog and recorded a rare grass owl, quolls, and yellow-bellied gliders.

A total of 53 projects covering environmental, economic, social and cultural uses and values of native forests have been approved so far for the Comprehensive Regional Assessments throughout NSW.

### Eden assessments nearing completion

With the RFA for Eden scheduled to be signed in December, the assessment projects in the region are drawing to a close, and assessment reports will soon be publicly available.

Local stakeholders volunteered for round the clock surveys of general species distribution, and the distribution of rare or threatened species in forests north and south of Merimbula. Teams have already reported sightings of a number of little-known or threatened species, including the threatened giant burrowing frog in the Yallumba State Forest near the Victorian border, and the large

footed mouse-eared bat - a fish-eating bat spotted in the Mt Inlay National Park.

Meanwhile, the Eden social and heritage assessments are well advanced.

The social assessment has involved community workshops, social surveys of forest users and case studies in the

industry. A random telephone survey has been conducted to gauge general attitudes to forest use and management issues.

Heritage workshops were held in Bombala, Wyndham, Bemboka, Cobargo, Candelo, Bega and Eden in June, with between 20 and 30 community representatives at each event.

## QUEENSLAND

**T**he Reference Panel for the South East Queensland RFA has met four times since May, as a range of Comprehensive Regional Assessments commence in the region.

A forum for peak bodies to come together with the Queensland and Commonwealth governments, the Reference Panel will develop positions to be taken forward to the

joint Commonwealth/State Steering Committee and identify issues of concern to stakeholders.

The panel represents the following industry, conservation, workers,

local government, indigenous and community bodies:

### **Industry**

Queensland Timber Board  
Cattlemen's Union  
United Graziers Association  
Minerals Council  
Queensland Beekeepers' Association

### **Conservation**

Queensland Conservation Council

Australian Rainforest Conservation Council  
The Wilderness Society

### **Indigenous Groups**

FAIRA Aboriginal Corporation  
Goolburri Aboriginal Corporation Land Council  
Gurang Land Council

### **Union**

Australian Workers Union

### **Local Government**

Local Government Association of Queensland

### **Other Community Bodies**

Forest Protection Society

CRA projects in more than 30 different areas are planned or under way to provide all the existing and new research needed for the RFA. They range from environmental studies of the forests' biodiversity, old growth and wilderness and studies of the region's cultural heritage and national estate values, to economic analysis of the timber and other forest-related industries, and research into the people and townships

of South East Queensland and how an RFA will affect them.

Bronwen Burke has been appointed Community Coordinator for the region.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Projects in progress

**C**RA projects are well under way in WA forests, and public meetings were held in key regional centres during June for interested members of local communities.

Projects which are nearing completion include the mapping of vegetation complexes across the entire south-west forests, an assessment of the region's mineral resources, mapping of soils and landforms and mapping of old growth forest and wilderness quality. Comprehensive reviews of data relevant to the biodiversity, old growth and National Estate (natural and cultural) assessments have already been completed.

Work has begun on more than 20 new projects, ranging from flora and fauna

surveys and mapping of old growth disturbance to economic industry profiles, social profiles and case studies in the south-west and National Estate assessments.

Local community groups will be invited to take part in the Community Heritage workshops and social assessment workshops between now and November.

### Stakeholder Reference Group

**M**ore than 50 industry, conservation, union, government and community bodies have been identified as key stakeholders in the WA RFA process. Their interests are represented in the Stakeholder Reference Group, which has now met three times. As well, two special reference groups have been formed - an Aboriginal Reference Group and a State Agreement Acts Committee.

## JANIS REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

**T**he final JANIS Report is now available on the nationally agreed criteria for the establishment of a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) reserve system.

The criteria are an essential part of the RFA process and are applicable to all native forests, and associated woodlands, within in each RFA region.

While many forest ecosystems are already represented in conservation reserves across Australia, the criteria provide an objective basis for evaluating and subsequently ensuring conservation of biological diversity and other values within the reserve system.

The JANIS Report will be an essential reference for anyone interested in the RFA process and Australian forest policy generally.

As well as explaining the three principles of the reserve system - what is really meant by Comprehensiveness, Adequacy and Representativeness - the report also includes a useful glossary of forest terms.

The criteria were endorsed by the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC) at its meeting last November before endorsement out of session by the Ministerial Council on Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture (MCFFA).

The Report is also available on the world wide web at <http://www.rfa.gov.au>

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### WWF PRAISES AUSTRALIAN FOREST POLICY

Australia's forest policy won international acclaim at the recent Earth Summit 2 in New York.

Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill welcomed praise by Dr Claude Martin, Director General of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - International, who said Australia's policy for the conservation of forest biodiversity significantly exceeded the WWF's minimum goal.

Australia has thrown its support behind the WWF's campaign for countries to conserve at least 10 per cent of each of their existing forest types in parks and reserves by the year 2000.

The WWF estimates that only 6 per cent of the world's forests are protected and biodiversity is being lost at an alarming rate.

In contrast, Australia's nationally agreed benchmark criteria for a Comprehensive, Representative and Adequate Reserve system are 15 per cent of each forest type as existed before European arrival, at least 60 per cent of Old-Growth forest and 90 per cent or more of high quality wilderness.

Australia was also praised by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, who said in a message to the Summit that it and other countries committed to achieving the WWF target had made a major contribution to forest conservation.

Senator Hill said he was proud of the high standards Australia had adopted and called for urgent action to protect the world's forests through both conservation and sustainable use.

### MONTREAL PROCESS

#### Framework of Regional Indicators

The Montreal Process Implementation Group for Australia (MIG) will be seeking public comment soon on a framework of regional indicators based on the Montreal Process criteria and indicators. At the Assessing Sustainable Forest Management Conference in November last year, it was agreed that the internationally agreed criteria address all the forest values that the broader community seeks to maintain. However the indicators need to be reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to Australia and then could be used as a basis for monitoring sustainable forest management in both RFA and non-RFA areas.

The process the MIG has established to refine the indicators includes expert workshops followed by further public consultation. The regional framework is expected to be finalised in October 1997 and will then be considered by the Standing Committees on Forestry and Conservation. State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministerial clearance will be sought subsequently.

The framework is expected to provide a basis for assessing progress towards the achievement of sustainable forest management at a regional scale. It

should also provide a mechanism for collecting information so that it can be aggregated to regional and national levels in a transparent and credible way.

Australia is one of 12 countries involved in the Montreal Process, which began in 1993 following the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The Montreal Process Working Group has developed a comprehensive set of 7 criteria and 67 indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests.

### **First Approximation Report**

Australia has prepared its contribution to the First Approximation Report of the Montreal Process Working Group, with the report expected to be released at the Eleventh World Forestry Congress in Turkey in October 1997.

Australia's report is being distributed nationally and will soon be available on the internet.

More information on the Montreal Process is on the world wide web:  
[www.dpie.gov.au/agfor/forests/montreal/index.html](http://www.dpie.gov.au/agfor/forests/montreal/index.html)

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## **RAISING AWARENESS OF RFAS**

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### **Creating Jobs, Protecting Forests**

**T**he theme "Creating Jobs, Protecting Forests" underpins a range of public relations materials aimed at raising awareness among the general public of the RFA process and outcomes.

Interested Stakeholder groups are welcome to use any of the publications and audio productions produced as part of the Commonwealth Communications Strategy.

### **RFA video**



Television networks throughout Australia will soon start screening a five minute segment on the RFA process as part of the National Recording Studio's 'Australia in Profile' series. Commissioned by the Forests Taskforce, the video outlines the general aims and objectives of RFAs and is expected to be used as a 'filler' by stations in regions where an RFA is planned or under way.

Copies can be made available to any group interested in using it as a discussion starter or educational tool.

### **'The Helix' - RFA special for science students**

The August edition of the CSIRO's Double Helix Club science magazine for school aged children, The Helix, has a special four page feature on RFAs. The colour liftout, aimed at students between the ages of nine and 13, explains why our forests are so valuable to all Australians in so many different ways, outlines the science of the CRA process and how RFAs try to ensure a balance between often conflicting values.

If your kids aren't members of the Double Helix Club but are interested in reading about what's happening in the forests, we have extra copies we can send you.

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## **FORESTS TASKFORCE**

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### **New head of Forests Taskforce**

After five intensely busy years working on forest policy, **Phil Glyde** has left the Forests Taskforce.

A senior officer of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Phil has gone to London to take up a two year exchange program with the British Cabinet Office. He and his family escaped the bitter Canberra winter at the end of June.

Having previously worked on the Resource Assessment Commission's Forest and Timber Inquiry, Phil has been a key figure in the RFA process and headed the Forests Taskforce since it was established in 1995.

With the first RFA signed in February this year and the Tasmanian RFA nearly completed, he has overseen tremendous progress in what has been one of Australia's most complex and controversial policy areas.

Phil leaves the Taskforce in the capable hands of **Richard Webb**, who joined the Taskforce at its inception as an officer of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Richard will already be well known to many stakeholder groups, particularly those he has worked closely with in his former role as RFA project manager dealing with NSW.

Richard is keen to build on Phil's legacy of close liaison with stakeholders and

interest groups as the RFA process gathers steam in all five RFA States.

Richard says that he finds forest issues the most difficult policy questions he has dealt with in 20 years working for government.

“While it’s hard work, it is worth it if we can help to achieve strong environmental outcomes and a secure future for the many Australians who depend on forest industries,” he says.

## COMMUNITY COORDINATOR PROFILE

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### **CRA Forest News introduces you to the Commonwealth RFA Community Coordinator for Western Australia.**

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#### **FRANCES CASELLA**

**T**he prospect of working closely with her own community was just one of the attractions of the WA Regional Forest Agreement for Frances Casella.

WA born and bred, Frances’ previous job involved long stints away from home base. While she enjoyed travelling extensively throughout Australia, she says one of the things she’s looking forward to is being able to stay in one area and put time and energy into establishing enduring relationships.

Frances brings excellent qualifications and a wealth of experience to the challenging job of Commonwealth

Forest Community Coordinator for the WA RFA.

For the past six years, she has been involved in similar work as part of a unique social research unit within the CSIRO. Based in Perth, in the Division of Land and Water, her job was to work with communities facing change in the management of and access to land or water resources. That involved liaising closely between communities and the proponents of change, be they industry or government agencies.

“Basically our job was to complement the physical and political science of change in resources with the human

science of development in rural and urban areas such as irrigation industry restructuring in the Murray Darling Basin, land use planning in WA's North East goldfields, WA Aboriginal\mining industry relationships, or storm water management in metropolitan communities in Perth, Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne," she said.

With post graduate qualifications in Psychology from Curtin University of Technology, Frances is an experienced facilitator and interviewer. She has a special interest in qualitative social research and an interest in public involvement strategies and interpreting the results and their significance. Frances pursued a career in training and development with both private enterprise

and government agencies, including Telecom, before joining the CSIRO.

In her new role, Frances is committed to ensuring that everyone with an interest in the future of WA forests can have an input to the RFA process.

"WA's forest areas are different to those on the east coast, and naturally there are a lot of competing interests," she said. "I think it's really important that the community coordinator acts impartially and works with stakeholder groups to ensure that all views get heard equally."

Frances will be working closely with her State counterpart, who also starts work during August.

### Community Coordinator Contacts

**The RFA Community Coordinators are keen to hear from anyone interested in forests and community issues in their region. Their contact numbers are:**

|                               |                 |                |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>Eden, Southern NSW:</b>    | Sue Richards    | (02) 6271 6698 |
| <b>Victoria:</b>              | Pam Robinson    | (03) 924 66804 |
| <b>South East Queensland:</b> | Bronwyn Burke   | (07) 389 69517 |
| <b>Western Australia:</b>     | Frances Casella | (08) 9222 9527 |

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### Forests Taskforce Contacts

|                           |                   |                |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>VICTORIA:</b>          | Tom Aldred        | (02) 6271 5082 |
| <b>NSW:</b>               | Gordon Neil       | (02) 6271 5548 |
| <b>TASMANIA:</b>          | Charlie Zammit    | (02) 6271 5487 |
| <b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA:</b> | Catharine Masters | (02) 6271 5183 |

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**QUEENSLAND:**

Robyn Bromley

(02) 6271 5587

**For more information or to be placed on our mailing lists, please contact the Taskforce on 02 6271 5130.**

**Readers who are on the World Wide Web can view background information, fact sheets, reports and papers released during the RFA process on Environment Australia's Environmental Resources Network (ERIN):**

**<http://www.rfa.gov.au>**