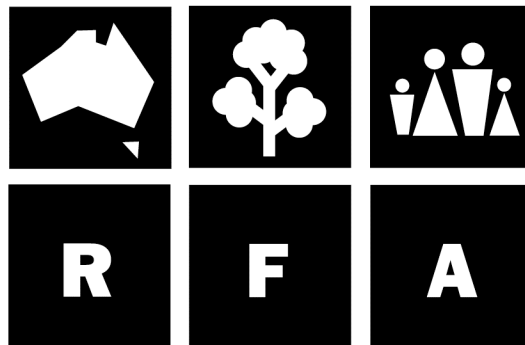


# CRA FOREST NEWS



**Regional Forest Agreements**

**Creating Jobs, Protecting Forests**

**No. 6 January 1998**

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**Forests Taskforce**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

**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**

**H**appy New Year and welcome to the sixth edition of the CRA FOREST NEWS, the newsletter of the Forests Taskforce in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

With Australia's first two Regional Forest Agreements signed and operating, a third on the verge of completion and nine others in full swing in four RFA States, 1997 was a big year for forest policy. This year will be even more challenging, as the groundbreaking work underway throughout our forests comes to fruition in four Australian States.

This edition of CRA Forest News covers some of the achievements of '97, particularly the historic agreement for Tasmania, which

became the first State to be covered by an RFA last November.

More importantly it looks forward to another 12 months of intense activity, particularly in Victoria, where the RFA for the Central Highlands is in its final stages of development and work on the North East is well advanced; in Western Australia, which is scheduled for completion very soon; and in NSW, where the Eden RFA is well into options development.

As well as State round-ups, CRA Forest News also reports on how Australia's RFA process has attracted international interest at the international forestry conference in Turkey. And we bring you the latest RFA Community Coordinator Profile.

## **TASMANIA'S RFA**



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It's official - Prime Minister John Howard and Premier Tony Rundle (right) with the signed RFA

Tasmania's historic Regional Forest Agreement was signed by the Prime Minister, John Howard, and the Premier, Tony Rundle on November 8.

The RFA has significant outcomes for both industry and the environment. Commonwealth support for Tasmania's sustainable forest industries will directly create 550 new jobs, with hundreds more flowing from investment in forest industries thanks to the certainty the RFA provides. Jobs in plantations and intensive forest management were advertised only days after the announcement.

At the same time, the RFA increases Tasmania's reserve system by 396,000 - or 17 per cent. Forty per cent of the State's total land area is now in reserves. A program to protect forest values on private land will also be established under the RFA, with \$30 million in Commonwealth funding. Private landowners have expressed great interest in how they can be involved in voluntary agreements under the program.

## **What happens now?**

With the RFA marking the removal of Commonwealth controls over export licences, the Tasmanian Government has embarked on the work of implementing the agreement. Work is underway to prepare data and maps for eventual gazettal of the forest reserve system and development of protection strategies for threatened species.

Tasmania will work closely with Environment Australia on the implementation of the program to conserve forest values on private land, aiming to have the strategic plan developed by March 1998.

## **What the Leaders Said**

Below are excerpts from speeches by the Prime Minister, John Howard, and the Premier of Tasmania, Tony Rundle before they signed the Tasmanian RFA at a forest nursery in the northern Tasmanian town of Perth.

### **Prime Minister John Howard:**

'This is quite an historic day, an historic moment and an historic Agreement for Tasmania and for an industry which is very much the heart and soul of the economic and social future of this State. It is also a very important day for the environment in Tasmania and for the environment throughout Australia.

'This is an outstandingly balanced agreement. It's an Agreement that will directly and indirectly generate about 1000 jobs. It's an agreement that gives a great must have a very high priority in the area of employment.

## **Information Kit**

An information kit containing the signed RFA document, map, press releases and facts sheets on what the RFA means for jobs and industry, the environment and forests on private land has been mailed to key stakeholders and everyone who participated in its development through the Public Land Use Commission.

If CRA Forest News readers have not already received a kit and would like one, please contact Ruth Dewsbury on (02) 6272 3999. The contents are also available on the net at [www.rfa.gov.au](http://www.rfa.gov.au)

sense of resource security to an industry which is the second largest employer of people in Tasmania. And when you are trying to achieve a balance, and when you try to strike the right balance between strongly competing interests I ask you always to think of the employment prospects of Australians. Employing Australians is the greatest single social challenge of any government, federal or state in the 1990s. And the decisions we take in every area of political responsibility

'I say to those who may be critical of this decision, think of the jobs it is generating for your fellow Tasmanians. Think of the investment in industry that has always been

important to Tasmania's well being. Since 1970 this industry has had no less than 30 inquiries. It has suffered what can probably be described as paralysis through constant analysis and it is now time for the industry, for those who work in the industry and for the people of Tasmania to get on with the job.

'This Regional Forest Agreement shows that sensible policy decisions can deliver good conservation outcomes while generating hundreds of jobs. There is funding of \$110 million over three years and that contribution from my government puts beyond any argument our commitment to sustainable forest industries, employment growth and secure protection of the forests.

'Both the Premier and I insisted that the agreement should be legally binding, and that is a very important source of comfort and security to those who will make investment decisions based on the strength of this agreement. The proposition that governments can encourage private sector people to make investments and then change the ground rules of the game after they've made the investment and walk away without any liability is a situation that I found unacceptable, and both the Premier and I have insisted upon the need for the agreement to be legally binding.

'The plantations and industry package of \$80 million will directly deliver 550 new



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The RFA team - front row: Joint Steering Committee Chair (Tasmania), Veronica Sakell (left) and Charlie Zammit, Tasmanian RFA Project Manager, (Commonwealth.) Back row, from left: Hans Drielsma, General Manager of Forests Management at Forestry Tasmania; Rod Pearse, Program Manager, Conservation and Land Management, DELM; and Richard Webb, Joint Steering Committee Chair and Head of the Commonwealth Forests Taskforce

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new jobs and indirectly deliver another four or five hundred. In total direct and indirect jobs numbering about 1000. It will give increased security to encourage investment and jobs, the RFA will deliver world class conservation outcomes. The RFA adds 396,000 hectares of public land to the conservation system which is an increase of 17 per cent, and it brings total reserves to 2.7 million hectares or 40 per cent of Tasmania's land area.

'How anybody in the name of reason can regard that as a sell out of the environment or a sell out of conservation values or a defiant indifference to the environment of this State or the environment of Australia is beyond ordinary human comprehension. I would also remind those critics that the reserve system protects more than 70 per cent of the Tarkine wilderness area, and the RFA also provides \$30 million for the protection of forest values on private land.

'The Premier and I have laboured very long and very hard to produce what both of us regard as a fair and balanced outcome. It generates jobs, it provides investment security over a long period of time for an industry that is indispensable to Tasmania's future. You can't have a Tasmanian future

without a viable forest industry. It is unrealistic to argue otherwise.

'This is a Regional Forest Agreement of which my government is very proud. It is a Regional Forest Agreement that delivers in full on the commitment I made and my colleagues made to strike a fair balance between preserving the environment, protecting treasured environmental values, but at the same time providing job opportunities for Australians, and particularly, job opportunities for Tasmania. I therefore am delighted to be present, I thank the Premier again for his cooperation. I thank all of those associated with this agreement. It's good news for Tasmania, and good news for a balanced approach to conservation and development in our country.'

### **Premier Tony Rundle:**

I am convinced as the Premier of this State that this document is a win for everyone.

It is a win for industry, it is a win for those people who are down there standing at the entrance although at this stage they don't realise it, it is a win for both sides of the argument. And we are not going to lose jobs in this State over this agreement, we are going to create about 1000 brand new jobs.

But further to that as part of the RFA process an analysis was carried out and a report was made that indicates that during the currency of this agreement, there will be 6000 further new jobs at least in the forest industries, 3000 further new jobs in the mineral processing and mining industries, and 3000 further jobs in ecotourism. So this is an agreement that Tasmanians should be proud of, including the conservation movement.

I want to pay tribute to the 300 scientists and professional people who worked on this project over the last two years. This is an

agreement based on science, it is not an agreement based on politics, and let us get that straight this morning. And to those people who worked constantly, to those people who went around and arranged the public consultations and the meetings around the State, you are the heroes and the heroines of this document because you are professional. You have produced the evidence and this agreement is based on all of that work.

To my colleagues who have worked with us, and there has obviously been considerable pressure and tugs of war as competing interests have jockeyed for positions to try to ensure, quite rightly, that their views were taken into account and that perhaps they could extract a bit more from the agreement than someone else, but the bottom line is we are here today to launch and to sign a document that is going to give security for the next 20 years.

What Tasmanians have now I believe is the most legally binding intergovernmental agreement that has ever been signed

between a Federal Government and a State or Territory. And this is historic, ground breaking stuff because Federal governments

have never wanted to be exposed to the risk of actually paying out half of hard dollars if they walked away from an Agreement.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Eden Options Paper

The results of the comprehensive regional assessment and options for the Eden RFA will soon be on public display throughout the region.

A series of briefings and public displays will be organised so that interested groups and individuals can examine the details in the maps and technical reports, and have questions answered by State and Commonwealth officers.

The displays will be widely advertised in the local press, and stakeholders will be informed of times, dates and venues through their Regional Forest Forum.

### Forest forum condemns vandalism in Southern Region

The Southern Regional Forest Forum has expressed concern at a spate of forest vandalism in the region over the past few months.

The vandalism has been mainly directed at logging plant equipment and forum in the region of logging plant and equipment. The forum reported in a November statement that acts of vandalism of revegetation plots and apiaries had also been brought to its attention.

The forum's chair, Professor Peter Kanowski, said the forum was united in condemning any vandalism as unacceptable and counterproductive.

The Southern Regional Forest Forum met for the fourth time in Canberra on November 4.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The RFA for the South West forest region of Western Australia is on track for completion in early 1998, with the release of the ESFM Report in December, the imminent release of the

Comprehensive Regional Assessment, World Heritage and Options reports and continuing work on the social assessment.

Consultations and workshops on a range

of projects took place throughout the South West during November and December and will continue in the lead-up to the development of the RFA.

### **ESFM Report**

**T**he Expert Panel report on Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management was the first major assesment to be released for public comment in December.

The report assessed the quality and integrity of systems and processes for all uses of forests across all tenures. It made 44 recommendations to improve current systems and ensure continuing review and improvement. These include changes to legislation and policies, planning processes and implementation systems, and monitoring.

The group found that the integrated approach to forest management taken by the Western Australian Government was one of the strengths of the system.

It found that CALM had generally well developed processes for strategic and operational planning for most aspects of forest management and that “these processes are supported by comprehensive inventories of the forest resource and sophisticated planning models, based on considerable research”.

It also suggested that planning to deal with more prominent threats such as major fires, pests and diseases such as dieback, as well as planning to protect endangered species, was generally well covered and backed by substantial research effort.

### **Information centres**

**E**verything Western Australians need to know about the RFA is available at information centres throughout the region and at some centres in the Perth metropolitan area. Information kits, maps and all technical and other reports are available for public viewing as soon as they are released.

In Perth, the information centres are at the Battye Library, at CALM’s State headquarters in Como and in its Woodvale library, and Mundaring and Armadale libraries in the outer metropolitan areas.

The regional libraries participating include Albany, Manjimup, Mandurah, Bridgetown, Collie, Bunbury, Margaret River, Busselton, Harvey, Boddington, Bunbury, Busselton, and Denmark.

### **Keeping up to date**

**W**estern Australians are also being kept up to date with the progress of the RFA through regular print advertisements in the West Australian Newspaper and major regional papers.

An information kit has been prepared for stakeholders as they participate in workshops and public meetings.

A dedicated telephone information line is also operating for anyone interested in finding out more about the RFA.

### **The number is 08 9480 5872.**

As well, the WA reports and releases will be on the net as they are released, at CALM’s NatureBase page:  
<http://www.calm.wa.gov.au> and on the



Commonwealth's RFA homepage:  
<http://www.rfa.gov.au>

## SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

**H**undreds of people from throughout the region attended a series of nine public meetings on the South East Queensland RFA last September.

The meetings were an opportunity for anyone interested in the process to question State and Commonwealth officers working on the RFA and to find out how they can keep in touch with its development.

An information package is being widely distributed throughout the region and has been sent to everyone who asked for more information at the meetings.

The kit outlines the aims and objectives of the RFA, answers commonly asked questions, and contains a map and a handy glossary of forest and RFA terms.

Meanwhile the Comprehensive Regional Assessment is proceeding well, with reports expected to be available early this year.

There will be another round of public information sessions on their release.

## VICTORIA

### **Central Highlands RFA close to completion**

**W**ith the final consultation period closing on the Directions Paper for the Central Highlands RFA in November, the

State and Commonwealth governments are spending the summer in the final stages of negotiation.

Under the scenario outlined in the report, the RFA would add about 115,000 hectares to the existing reserve system (an increase of about 64 per cent). At the same time, certainty for the forest based industries is expected to contribute to jobs growth and could see the gross value of saw milling production increase to \$133 million and direct employment rising to 820

jobs. This increased turnover may

contribute a further \$248 million to State output and 1886 jobs to the Victorian economy.

### **North East progressing well**

**T**he North East region is now well into its assessment phase.

Follow-up heritage workshops took place in October followed by consultations with indigenous groups on heritage issues, and the resulting

inventory of significant places outlined to the community at meetings in November.

The social assessment is also full steam ahead. A random phone survey of around 1100 households was conducted in November on the importance of forests to the families and communities of the region. Assessments of old growth and wilderness have been completed.

## World Heritage Report

**T**he World Heritage Expert Panel Report for WA, NSW and Queensland was released this month and is available on the net at [www.rfa.gov.au](http://www.rfa.gov.au) .

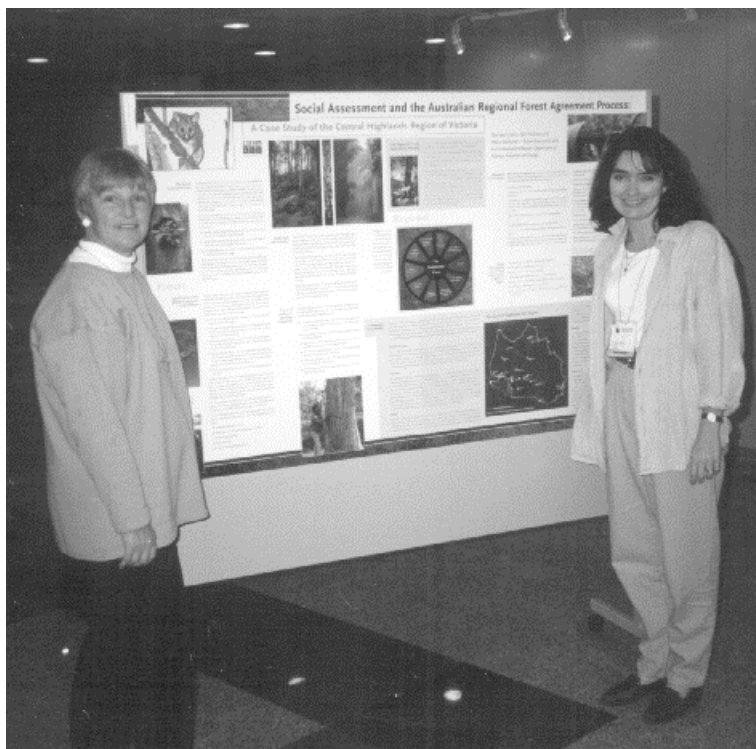
The Panel, chaired by Professor Ralph Slatyer, Emeritus Professor of Environmental Biology at the Australian National University, was charged with the task of advising governments of themes of outstanding universal value relevant to Australia's forested areas and to also advise them on which forested places in NSW, WA and Qld may require further assessment as possible best global expression of these themes.

Themes examined by the Panel in relation to their work included the following:

- the origin and development of Gondwanan biota and landforms;
- evolution of landforms, species and ecosystems under conditions of stress;
- traditional human settlement and land use;
- European expansion of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The report provides information to facilitate the inclusion of the full range of issues in developing a CAR reserve system and a RFA.

## International interest in Social Assessments



Taking the Social Assessment to the world - Pam Robinson (left) and Sheri Coakes.

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Australia's unique RFA social assessment process was showcased to the world's leading forestry experts at the 11th International Forestry Conference in Turkey last October.

Dr Sheri Coakes and the RFA Community Coordinator for Victoria, Pam Robinson, used Victoria's Central Highlands region as a case study of how the RFA process factors people and communities into forest policy.

The then head of the Forest Assessment Branch in DPIE, Mike Lee, and Catherine Bright, from the Environment Forests Taskforce in Environment Australia, also presented a joint poster paper on Australia's forest policy, from the RFA process to plantations and farm forestry.

The Australian delegates to the conference, which attracted more than 4000 delegates from 145 countries, confirmed that Australia is a world leader in sustainable forest management.

"Australia is well up with what is happening in forests and is at the forefront of current

thinking,” Pam Robinson said.

“There was great interest in the fact that we are doing social assessments, particularly among some of the Scandinavian countries.”

With the Central Highlands RFA close to completion at the time of the conference, Pam and Sheri chose the region as an example of links and townships, of how community and interest groups can have direct input into the development of an RFA and how forest policy can impact on the whole community.

Pam said it was important to use available models when embarking on social assessment in forest policy. “One of the things that maybe forestry needs to remember is that social impact and community development work is already happening in a range of other areas, like health and education and so on. We need to remember that, and not re-invent techniques we already have.”

## Community Coordinator Profile

### Bronwen Burke

#### Community Coordinator for South East Queensland

As the Commonwealth’s Community Coordinator for the South East Queensland RFA, Bronwen Burke covers one of the biggest RFA regions in the country.

With a population of two and a half million in 44 local government areas, the region stretches south from Gladstone in the north to the NSW border, and east to the Great Dividing Range.

It’s a region of great social and cultural diversity, which was part of the appeal of the job for Bronwen when she joined the RFA team in August last year.

“This is an excellent opportunity for me to be involved in a regional land use planning activity,” she said. “Forest policy is a very complex area, and this is the first time we have had a regional activity involving social assessment on such a big scale.”

Originally from Toowoomba, Bronwen moved to Brisbane as a student of Environmental Science at Griffith University. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science, majoring in the social sciences and with a particular interest in the relationship between people and issues of land and resource management.

Bronwen also has a graduate diploma in library and information studies, which gives her the research skills so essential for the RFA social assessment.

Before becoming Community Coordinator for the RFA, she worked for a number of years in the community sector in far South West Queensland, assisting Aboriginal communities to have their interests represented in land use management and planning, and facilitating their involvement in natural resource management.

She has also worked as part of the social impact assessment unit within the Queensland Government's Department of Families, Youth and Community, where her role was to ensure that social impact assessment and public participation were fundamental to any government land use planning decisions.

In Queensland, as in WA, the social assessment for the RFA involves a collaborative approach between the Commonwealth and State teams. Bronwen is colocated in the State department of Natural Resources with her State counterpart, Laurel Johnson, who is a social planner.

Between them they are well advanced on the social assessment, with an extensive review of literature and secondary data already completed.

Bronwen is now looking forward to closer contact with the communities of South East Queensland and more intensive research, ranging from a random telephone survey of 2000 households on the importance of forests to the community to surveys of forest industries and mill employees, community workshops and focus groups with a broad range of stakeholders, from timber workers to cattlemen and beekeepers.

After six months in the job, she has been impressed by the level of awareness and interest in forest issues throughout the regional communities.

"Many groups are both highly articulate and well mobilised on forest management, and want to be actively involved in the RFA," she said.

"The outcomes of the RFA we would like to see for the people of South East Queensland are on two levels. We want to ensure firstly that people have a sense of ownership of the RFA, and secondly that decision makers involved are aware of the relevant social issues and the impact the RFA may have on the community."

## **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:**

**Eden, Southern NSW:** Sue Richards (02) 6271 6698  
**Victoria:** Pam Robinson (03) 924 66804  
**South East Queensland:** Bronwen Burke (07) 389 69517  
**Western Australia:** Frances Casella (08) 9222 9527

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### **Forests Taskforce Contacts**

**VICTORIA:** Phillip Fitch (02) 6271 5082  
**NSW:** Gordon Neil (02) 6271 5548  
**TASMANIA:** Charlie Zammit (02) 6271 5487  
**WESTERN AUSTRALIA:** Catharine Masters (02) 62715077  
**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>**