



A profile of the Eden region

The Eden RFA Region covers about 800,000 hectares, from near Bermagui and Nimmitabel in the north to Delegate and Cape Howe in the south. About two thirds of the area is forested, with most forest on public lands - either as State forest (25 per cent of the total area) or national park (32 per cent). National parks and State forest total 452,000 hectares.

Forests and the environment

The Eden region has a diverse range of ecosystems, ranging from temperate eucalypt forest and temperate rainforest to salt marsh and floodplain wetlands.

The Comprehensive Regional Assessments identified a total of 72 ecosystems of which 49 are dominated by eucalypts. Thirty-five forest ecosystems are considered well reserved in dedicated reserves according to the nationally agreed reserve criteria for forests.

Most stands of old growth forest occur in a complex mosaic of mature and younger forest. Eighteen of the 47 forest ecosystems with old growth forests are also considered well reserved according to the criteria. Three areas within the region - Brogo, Nadgee and Genoa - have been found to meet the nationally agreed criteria for high quality forest wilderness.

Fifty-five threatened and/or forest dependent species of animals were studied for the assessment including the greater glider, the long-footed potoroo and the stuttering barred frog. Habitat for a number of animal species were found to be adequately protected within the current system (for example the southern-brown bandicoot).

The long-footed potoroo is listed as endangered in State and Commonwealth legislation. Currently there is a moratorium on timber harvesting operations around sites where the long-footed potoroo has been recorded. Further research on this species may be required before the moratorium is lifted.

Forest industries

In 1996, the Eden region produced about a quarter of the State's hardwood - three per cent of sawlog production, and 59 per cent of pulplogs. The gross value of output by the region's hardwood timber industry amounted to \$65 million in 1996-97, of which \$8 million was earned in forestry management, \$10 million in logging operations and \$47 million in milling operations. End products include building materials, paper and furniture.

In 1995-96 there were 13 hardwood mills sourcing logs from the region, some located outside the region. Of these, five received logs from State forests, six received logs from private forests and two from both sources. Three mills closed during 1996. The export woodchip processing mill near Eden is the region's largest hardwood processing operation.

The economic assessment identified that the hardwood timber industry in the region directly employed 301 people in 1996-97 - 46 in forestry management, 152 in logging and haulage and 103 in milling (both sawmill and pulpwood). Most of these people live in the communities of Eden and Bombala. The hardwood timber industry indirectly employed another 310 people in 1996-97.

There are more than 34 000 hectares of commercial softwood plantations in the region, which supply 50 000 cubic metres of sawlog and 35 000 tonnes of pulpwood per year. This resource is processed at a mill in Bombala which employs around 30 workers.

Tourism is also significant to the region's economy. More than half a million visitors to coastal and inland national parks and State forests are estimated to spend between \$10 and \$15 million in the region each year.

People and communities

In 1996 the Eden RFA region had a population of around 30 200, which is expected to grow to about 34 600 by 2006.

The largest industry employer in that year was the retail trade (15 per cent of total employed) followed by the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries (14 per cent). Other major employers were accommodation, cafes and restaurants, and the manufacturing industry.

A study for the RFA estimated that the native forest industry generates expenditure worth about \$23 million each year, with wages and salaries contributing over \$10 million within the region.

A random telephone survey for the social assessment found that the issues which most concerned the residents within the region were unemployment (47 per cent), followed by the health system (43 per cent) and the environment (35 per cent). Most people used the forests more than once a week, mainly for recreation.