

SOUTHERN RFA RESERVE OPTIONS - REFER TO MAP 3

SOUTH COAST SUB-REGION 45,000 m³ OF HIGH QUALITY LARGE LOGS PER ANNUM

This option focuses on meeting the JANIS conservation targets and reserve design criteria to the extent possible while providing a deliverable yield of 45,000 m³ per annum of high quality large sawlogs for 20 years, and at least 43,000m³ per annum thereafter. Key aspects of the option are outlined below.

- The addition of 172,500ha to the dedicated reserve system and 60,000ha of informal reserve and areas reserved by prescription.
- The establishment of a continuous 350km north-south reserve along the escarpment from the Victorian border to south of Macquarie Pass with three links through hinterland forests to the coastal and near coast parks.
- The partial reservation of Monga State Forest, maintaining access to timber resource adjacent to River Road.
- The partial reservation of northern Tallaganda State Forest.
- The reservation of Deua Wilderness (provisionally identified) with partial reservation of the upper catchment of the Deua River.
- The partial reservation of Kioloa State Forest east of the Princes Highway.
- The reservation of most of the public land in the catchments of Burrill, Tabourie, Termeil and Meroo Lakes, and the establishment of east-west links to Morton National Park.
- The reservation of most of the catchment of Berrara Creek around Swan Lake in Conjola State Forest; the reservation of the upper catchment of Conjola Creek and the establishment of an east-west link with Morton National Park.
- The reservation of part of Bodalla State Forest (including Dignams Creek) and part of Wandella State Forest and the establishment of an east-west link with Wadbilliga National Park.
- The reservation of a number of small areas of Crown land around Nowra and on the tablelands.
- The establishment of seven new Crown reserves for conservation management by the NPWS which allow for some exploration and potential mining.
- Additional protection of conservation values through the development of prescriptions for application in harvesting operations on State forest through an Integrated Forestry Operations Approval
- The zoning of selected areas of State forest as informal conservation reserve under the SFNSW Forest Management Zoning system.
- A deliverable annual yield of 45,000 m³ of large, high quality sawlogs for 20 years and at least 43,000 m³ per annum thereafter.
- A gross value of output for hardwood timber mills of \$19.3m-\$22.3m.
- Direct employment within the hardwood timber industry of 215-223 people.
- A flow-on to the region's economy of \$1.8 m from this level of wood supply¹.

IMPLICATIONS

Wood supply implications

The main wood supply implications of this option are:

- the species composition of the large high quality sawlog supply for the important commercial species in the 0-20 year period is 44% Spotted Gum, 7% Brown Barrel, 11% Blackbutt and 5% Yellow Stringybark;
- from 0-20 years, the yield of high quality large sawlog produced from the net harvest area is 0.46 m³/ha/yr, a 22% reduction from the yield produced by the net harvest area in the current State Forest tenure; and
- an area of 8,909ha (30%) of the silviculturally treated forest² that occurs on the existing State Forest is reserved and excluded from timber production.

¹ This figure includes the estimated changes associated with the direct impacts in the timber industry at this level of wood supply.

² Silviculturally treated areas of State forest are areas in which significant silvicultural work such as timber stand improvement and forest regeneration treatments (ringbarking, culling, tractor disturbance, sowing, plantation) has been carried out to enhance sawlog productive capacity. The resultant areas are characterised by mature to young stands which are relatively even-aged, have a low level of tree defect and are growing vigorously due to limited competition from larger trees that are not of high sawlog quality. They are stands that carry or have the potential to carry high volumes of high quality sawlog.

Environment and heritage implications

The tables included in the information kit provide detailed information on levels of protection for environment and heritage values in this option. In summary, this option:

- meets the achievable targets on available public land in dedicated reserves for 61 forest ecosystems (62% of the targets) and for 29 old growth forest ecosystems (52% of the targets). Targets for a further five forest ecosystems and for a further six old growth forest ecosystems are met in informal reserves and areas reserved by prescription;
- meets the achievable targets on available public land in dedicated reserves for 85 priority fauna species (72% of the targets) and for 61 priority flora species (71% of the targets). Targets for one additional priority fauna species and for a further three priority flora species are met in informal reserves and areas reserved by prescription; and
- reserves 88.1% of NWI \geq 12 wilderness in the South Coast subregion. Areas provisionally identified as wilderness will be considered for identification under the NSW Wilderness Act 1987. Identified wilderness may be declared under the Act and added to existing wilderness areas in the region following a separate wilderness consultation process. All areas of provisionally identified wilderness on public land are reserved.

Key natural national estate outcomes are enhanced reservation of:

- existing natural national estate places, especially the Mongarlowe and Buckenbowra Rivers National Estate Place through reservation of Buckenbowra State Forest and, in the Murramarang area, Benandarah and Kioloa State Forests;
- national estate values, including successional stages, national estate flora and fauna values, and natural landscape values through the reserve additions such as coastal-escarpment links and a link between Deua and Budawang National Parks and additions in Wandella, Bodalla, Berlang, Conjola, Meryla, Wingello, Yadbora and Tallanganda State Forests; and
- Crown land in the Hawkesbury sandstone region.

Economic and social implications

The annual supply of 45,000m³ of high quality large sawlogs per annum for 20 years would have the following implications for the timber industry and communities in the South Coast sub-region.

- Direct hardwood timber milling employment would increase from 164 people in 1998/99 to between 172 and 180. Employment in the harvesting and haulage sector would rise by one person. This represents a total increase in direct employment in the hardwood industry of 9-17 people.
- The gross value of output from the hardwood industry (including timber processed from private property) would total between \$19.3m and \$22.3m, an increase of approximately \$1.2m-\$4.3m compared to 1998/99.
- At this supply level it is predicted that all existing mills would remain in operation maintaining current production levels. Harvesting and haulage activity would also remain at around current levels.
- As a result of flow-on effects associated with timber industry activity on the South Coast, employment in the sub-region would increase by approximately 16 people and the total value of gross output for the sub-region would be \$3,333.8m, an increase of \$1.8m compared to 1998/99.
- Implementing this option would provide businesses and communities with added certainty regarding wood supply. The predicted increase in timber industry employment is likely to have a minor effect on community vitality.