



The Yalud Mines and Cemetery south west of Nowra are proposed for listing on the NSW State Heritage Inventory and were submitted as sites of social significance in community workshops.

PHOTOGRAPH: Helen Brayshaw & Annie Beckford



Bushwalking in Currowan State Forest.

PHOTOGRAPH: State Forests of NSW



Carlisle School of Art woodwork student, Michael Cammack, created this chair from strong south coast spotted gum, steam bending the structural components and turning the slats with ammonia.

PHOTOGRAPH: Michael Cammack

world heritage

The World Heritage Expert Panel identified potential World Heritage values in the Southern region for two Australia-wide themes. One is a eucalyptus evolution and diversity theme, where the natural forest areas extending from the sea to the Alps and inland slopes are of particular interest. The other is a sub-theme on Aboriginal dreaming and artistic expression, where sites in the Gulluga-Nadjaruka (Mt Drumedary-Little Drumedary) mountains and Sydney rock art sites were identified by the Panel as warranting further investigation.

wilderness

Both the State and Commonwealth governments have requirements to assess wilderness.

Wilderness assessments in the region under the NSW Wilderness Act are nearing completion within 16 study areas totalling 316,400 hectares. Areas that meet the wilderness criteria will be termed Provisionally Identified Wilderness for consideration during negotiations towards a Regional Forest Agreement. NSW Government decisions on wilderness declaration will follow public exhibition of the assessment results including wilderness declaration options.

For the RFA, wilderness is being measured according to the nationally agreed criteria to determine the proportion to be placed in reserves.

The State's provisionally identified wilderness will also be considered in signing the RFA.

natural & cultural heritage

Forestry, pastoral and other activities have left their mark on the forest landscape with sawmills, sleeper cutter sites, gold mines and bullock tracks. The region also has many places of natural heritage. Assessments identified sites in the Southern region that are of particular significance to regional communities, including the Snowy River, Pilot Hill Arboretum and the Bomboy Picnic Area. Natural Heritage Studies are being conducted across the region including places such as Kosciuszko National Park and Morton National Park.

indigenous interests

Forested landscapes contain much evidence of Aboriginal use of and spiritual link to the land, which can be protected through:

- The protection of Aboriginal sites and artifacts; and
- The maintenance of natural forest values.

The RFA will address current forest management practices in relation to Indigenous interests. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and State Forests of NSW are reviewing Indigenous cultural heritage management in consultation with Aboriginal communities, aiming to develop systems that better consider the landscape context of sites and that provide for efficient protection and greater involvement of Aboriginal communities in decision making.

managing the forests

The RFA will establish how our forests will be managed and protected for the future, whether they are in national parks and reserves or in State forests used for timber production or other uses. For example, NSW Government agencies including the National Parks and Wildlife Service and State Forests of NSW are developing strategies for ecologically sustainable forest management (ESFM).

These include:

- Forest Agreements outlining overall management approaches;
- Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals, which determine the management of State forest areas of the CAR reserve system;
- Environmental Management Systems for State forests and National Parks;
- Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management Plans for State Forests;
- Codes of Forest Practice;
- Cultural Heritage Management Guidelines.

These systems and processes will address activities such as timber harvesting, fire prevention and detection, feral animal and noxious weed control.

what happens now?

Your views are invited on RFA issues relating to the protection of environmental values, the development of an internationally competitive timber industry, and the ecologically sustainable management of native forests, and any other issues you consider should be addressed in the RFA.

You can send written submissions to:

RFA Steering Committee
PO Box 489
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Submissions close on 5 November 1999. This will allow the State and Commonwealth Governments to take your views into account before finalising the RFA by the end of December 1999.

Where can I find more information?

Reports and data prepared for the Southern RFA can be viewed on the Internet with other RFA background material at <http://www.rfa.gov.au> or refer to details on information sessions being organised through the Southern Regional Forest Forum described in the enclosed leaflet.

If you have any further queries please contact:

Forests Taskforce

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Phone: 1800 650 983
Fax: 02 6271 5511

Resource and Conservation Division

Dept of Urban Affairs and Planning
Phone: 02 9228 3166
Fax: 02 9228 4967



NSW GOVERNMENT

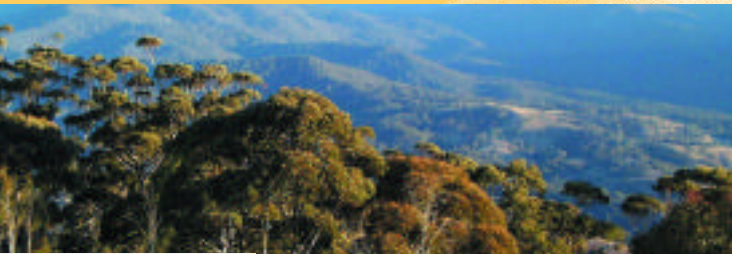


COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT



Regional Forest Agreements

A regional forest agreement for Southern NSW



what is an RFA?

Forest Agreement (RFA) for the Southern region of NSW is one of a series of agreements being developed between the Commonwealth and New South Wales to secure the future use and management of the State's native forests.

The RFA will be in force for 20 years, subject to five-yearly reviews, and will aim to provide certainty for forest-based industries, conservation and the community. The RFA has three main objectives:

- to protect environmental values in a world class Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) Reserve system of national parks and reserves;
- to encourage development of an internationally competitive timber industry; and
- to manage native forests in an ecologically sustainable way.

The Agreement will be based on the scientific comprehensive regional assessment of the social, economic, environmental and cultural heritage values of the region's native forests. The assessment included more than 50 technical projects, undertaken over three years with the participation of key forest stakeholders. The regional community contributed local knowledge and expertise through their participation in projects and through the Southern Regional Forest Forum.

the region

An area of about six million hectares from the edge of the Sydney basin to the Victorian border and west almost to Albury has been studied for the comprehensive regional assessment. (It excludes the Eden Region which is covered by its own Regional Forest Agreement.)

The Southern RFA will cover the 4,513,000 hectares in the lower part of this region. The information in this brochure relates to this RFA region. (Following completion of the Southern RFA, the assessments undertaken for the northern area will be used in a process designed to achieve similar levels of certainty for industry and conservation.)

About 45 per cent of the region is public land, of which about 80 per cent is forested. The remaining 55 per cent is private land, about 30 per cent of which is forested.

National parks (1,032,500 hectares), State forest (643,200 hectares) and Crown reserves (including leasehold) managed by the Department of Land and Water Conservation (361,500 hectares) currently total 2,037,200 hectares.

There were approximately 118,000 people employed in the Southern RFA region in 1996. The main employers were retail, manufacturing and health and community services.

the timber industry

The Southern Region produces about 28 per cent of the State's hardwood sawlogs and 17 per cent of pulp logs.

In 1997/98, there were 22 hardwood mills sourcing logs from the Southern region. Two of these mills were outside the region, but sourced a significant proportion of their timber from forests in the Southern Region. Seven small mills are sourced exclusively from private land. Nine mills, each of which processes more than 5,000 cubic metres of logs per annum, accounted for 93 per cent of the Southern region sourced logs purchased that year.

The value of production of the 22 hardwood timber mills was \$31 million in 1997/98 and they employed an estimated 920 people that year.

The certainty provided by the RFA will encourage investment in new technologies and promote value-adding initiatives to make better and more efficient use of the timber resource.

The softwood industry is also significant in the Southern Region. Seven mills and processing centres purchased around 715,000 cubic metres of softwood logs and 235,000 tonnes of pulpwood in 1997/98. The industry employs 1,300 people at the main processing centre at Tumut.

wood supply

In total, hardwood log purchases in the region were around 166,400 cubic metres in 1998/99, with 127,400 cubic metres from the south coast subdivision and 39,000 cubic metres from the Tumut subdivision. Wood supply contracts between State Forests NSW and the timber industry currently provide 83,603 cubic metres per annum of quota quality sawlog.

In addition to the supply of timber from state forest, approximately 15,000 - 20,000 cubic metres of sawlog comes from the region's private forests.

The Southern region includes 92,040 hectares of plantations, (40 hectares of hardwood and 92,000 hectares of softwood). A study is under way to examine the potential to expand plantations and the RFA will address longer-term wood supply issues, including the supplementation of supplies through hardwood and softwood plantation development.

government assistance to industry

In addition to the certainty of resource supply which the RFA will provide, assistance may be available through the Forest Industry Structural Adjustment Program (FISAP). Under that program and subject to eligibility, industry and timber workers can receive assistance for industry development, training and value-adding.

tourism

Tourism and recreation are important industries, with visitors spending approximately \$1 billion in the region in 1996/97. This is generated through both nature-based and other tourism and recreation activities.

The coast and its beaches, the forests, mountains and the alpine areas and snowfields support a range of tourism activities which are likely to increase in significance, given structural changes under way in the tourism industry.

mining

The area has potential for a variety of commodities, including coal, gold, silver, copper-lead-zinc, limestone, gemstones and construction materials.

Current quarrying and mining in the region operates mainly on unforested land. The South Marulan limestone quarry is the biggest operation, with an annual production of some 2.7 million tonnes of limestone. The Southern Coalfield, partly within the region, is the only source of hard coking coal in New South Wales and supplies both the domestic steel industry and the export market.

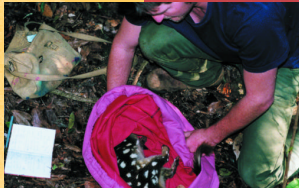
other forest industries

Other industries operating in the forests include grazing, beekeeping, firewood and seed collecting. Assessments of these industries have identified their contribution to regional communities and the economy.



Sawmill benchmark, Bateman's Bay

PHOTOGRAPH: State Forests of NSW



Forest surveys for the RFA included capture and release of vulnerable species such as the leucophaea spotted-tailed quail *Dasyornis maculatus*, which dwells in rock crevices and hollow logs in moist forests. PHOTOGRAPH: H. Achurch

the car reserve system

The RFA will establish a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) Reserve system that is derived from nationally agreed criteria for the protection of forest biodiversity, old-growth and wilderness values.

The criteria aim to reserve:

- 15 per cent of the estimated extent of each forest ecosystem prior to European arrival;
- at least 60 per cent of old-growth forest; and
- 90 per cent or more of high quality wilderness.

Other criteria deal with representativeness, rare species, geographic variation and other factors important for long term conservation. The CAR reserve system will include:

- Dedicated reserves (national parks, nature reserves, flora reserves);
- Internal reserves on State Forests (such as forest management zones) and crown lands;
- Forest management prescriptions under NSW Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals.

The western part of the region in particular has a number of forest ecosystems on private land and CAR Reserve system is likely to be complemented by voluntary conservation measures in private forests.

ecosystems

Assessments in the Southern region have identified approximately 130 forest ecosystems. Mapping of the forest ecosystems is nearing completion.

The most extensive tracts of old growth forest are in existing reserves. Mapped old growth forest outside reserves, particularly in the coastal environments, is fragmented. Detailed old growth mapping is still under way.

The CAR reserve will protect forest ecosystems and old growth through formal reserves, State Forest Zoning and management prescriptions.

threatened species

More than 130 priority plant species and 61 animal species were assessed in the Southern region.

Animals include the tiger quoll, the powerful owl and the eastern false pipistrelle bat, (very little is known of its habits and it is on low numbers throughout its range). The Booroolong Frog, once common in rocky creeks, flowing west of the Great Divide, has suffered a major decline in population and is now considered one of the most highly threatened frogs in NSW.

Plants include the rare eucalypt *Eucalyptus langleyi*, and the *Pinellia humilis* which was found in the Southern CRA survey for the first time since its only previous documented record early this century.