



Jobs and forest industries

The RFA delivers 20 years of certainty for the Southern region's forest-based industries to plan ahead and explore new opportunities. The region's native hardwood timber industry, accounting for direct and flow-on effects, contributed \$46.4 million (or 1.3 per cent of gross regional product) to the region's economy in 1998-99. Including the softwood industry, which has a substantial presence around the Tumut area, this brings the timber industry's contribution to approximately 6.3 per cent of gross regional product.

The timber industry

The region's native public hardwood timber industry directly generated output of around \$21 million in 1998-99 and provided direct employment for 241 people. This activity accounted for about 28 per cent of the State's hardwood production and 17 per cent of pulp log production.

Wood supply

Timber supplies will be at the following levels:

South Coast sub-region

The RFA provides for the supply of a minimum of 48,500 cubic metres per annum of high quality large logs for 20 years in the South Coast sub-region.

This volume will be achieved through a combination of harvesting from current State Forest areas and, in the longer term, from acquired land and new plantations. Harvesting on these additional lands will be carried out sustainably in accordance with the Forest Agreement and Integrated Forestry Operations Approval for the region. The productivity of the public forests will also be improved through silvicultural treatment in certain suitable areas.

The Governments will provide up to \$9 million (NSW \$7.75 million, Commonwealth \$1.25 million) to achieve these outcomes. The silvicultural treatment program alone will employ an additional 15 people for up to five years.

At this level of supply, it is estimated that direct employment in the hardwood industry in the South Coast sub-region (including employment associated with harvesting) will increase by up to 20 people.

Tumut sub-region

The RFA provides for the supply of a minimum of 48,000 cubic metres per annum of high quality large logs for 20 years in the Tumut sub-region. At this increased level of supply, it is estimated that direct employment in the native hardwood industry in the Tumut sub-region (including employment associated with harvesting) could increase by about 38 people.

With the signing of the RFA substantial new investment is expected to proceed in the harvesting and processing sectors of the South Coast and Tumut sub-regions.

Industry assistance

With the signing of this RFA, funding through the joint Commonwealth-State NSW Forest Industry Structural Adjustment Package (FISAP) becomes available to provide assistance for businesses and workers dependent on native forests. The FISAP includes industry development assistance to increase value adding, competitiveness and employment as well as structural adjustment assistance to those businesses and workers adversely affected by the RFA.

Other employment initiatives

- A \$5 million program of forested land purchase and plantation establishment. This project increases the area of forest for long-term sawlog production in the South Coast sub-region by strategic private property purchases.
- A \$4 million program of native forest silvicultural treatment. This program will improve the long-term log supply from State forests in the South Coast sub-region forests by investing in improved silviculture techniques. It will employ 15 people for up to five years.
- The employment by State Forests of NSW of two Aboriginal cultural heritage officers in the Southern region to give greater protection to cultural heritage and foster a close working partnership between the Aboriginal community and the Government. \$150,000 per annum has been made available over five years for these two positions.
- A commitment by the NSW Government of \$33 million over four years to long-term management of new national parks, creating up to 91 jobs. In addition, there will be \$2.6 million provided over four years for capital investment in infrastructure works, including visitor facilities and the acquisition of plant and equipment.