1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW REPORT

The Social Assessment Overview Report is a stand alone document aimed at consolidating all social information collected during the Comprehensive Regional Assessment (CRA) phase of the Regional Forest Agreement. No specific Terms of Reference have been developed for the Social Assessment Report. However, four social assessment project briefs were approved by the Steering Committee and undertaken by the joint State, Commonwealth social assessment team. The core data presented in this report has been gathered through the social assessment projects. They are:

- *SE5.1 Post Impact Studies Analysis* - a literature review of past forest use decisions and social impact assessment.
- *SE5.2 Regional Social Profile* - a baseline socio-demographic profile of the SEQ RFA region including stakeholder identification and profiling.
- *SE5.3 Social Case Study Areas* - providing baseline social data for a range of communities likely to be sensitive to changes in forest use and management.
- *SE5.4 Business Dependency Survey* - outlines the linkages between state forests, industry use and local communities. The report identifies the social catchments based on forest use, forest user businesses', and employees' household expenditure.

The Social Assessment Report provides general baseline data on the SEQ RFA region including:

- demographic data
- identification of forest dependent communities; and
- identification of the views and concerns of stakeholders and forest communities.

The Social Assessment Report places a particular emphasis on the communities and occupational groups which are dependent on the use of the State forests of the region for production purposes. The emphasis on these communities and groups reflects the need to consider the social impacts of changes following from the RFA in the use and management of State forests on the communities and occupational groups reliant on the forests.

The aim of the Social Assessment Report is to give an opportunity for decision makers, stakeholders and communities to gain a broad understanding of the social elements of the SEQ RFA, as currently understood. This has been done in response to people's concern that each of the social projects have been reported in isolation from each other, and that an overview document would be of assistance in gaining an overall understanding of the research conducted for the social assessment.

The RFA will potentially affect everyone who uses or has an interest in the forests of South East Queensland. This includes people who work in the forests in the timber industry, tourism and other forest based industries, conservationists, scientists, students, indigenous communities, bushwalkers, and other sporting and recreational users.

This social assessment does not address the potential social benefits of the SEQ RFA to other industries such as tourism and recreation. This is a reflection of the individual project specifications approved as part of the CRA social assessment phase. Other CRA assessment projects have dealt specifically with recreation and tourism interests in SEQ forests. All the information collected in the CRA will be incorporated for consideration in the integration phase to assist option development.

1.2 PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPING A SOCIAL PROFILE FOR MANAGING CHANGE

The social planning aspect of the SEQ RFA is best undertaken as a two stage process. The first stage is a social assessment which (1) outlines the historical context to the RFA, (2) collects and analyses primary and secondary data to obtain social trends and conditions and (3) identifies issues of concern. The information collected has been incorporated into this Report and will be used to assist the development of options for future forest use. Stage 2 of the social planning process includes a process for managing change. The timing and process of Stage 2 has yet to be determined by the Steering Committee.

Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich (1990) state that the goal of a social (impact) assessment process 'is to anticipate and describe social effects of change, so that they can be managed as early as possible, and to involve all groups so as to manage the benefits and costs of change in the process of social development'. The stages of such a process are:

1. **Scoping** - including identification of issues, variables to be described and measured, study boundaries and likely areas of impact

2. **Profiling** - including overview and analysis of current social context and historical trends

3. **Formulation of alternatives** - including examination and comparison of options for change

4. **Projection and estimation of effects** - including detailed examination of impacts of one or more options against decision criteria

5. **Monitoring, mitigation and management** - collection and use of information about actual effects by different participants to mitigate negative effects and manage change in general

6. **Evaluation** including a review of the effectiveness of the social assessment process and the social effects of change (Taylor et al,1990).

Stages 1 and 2 above have been undertaken in the development of the Social Assessment Report. This Report presents the primary and secondary data collected through the scoping and profiling phase.