

Communications Program

The initiatives outlined in the RFA Supplementary Agreement constitute significant improvements in the sustainable management of Tasmania's forests, particularly protection of old growth, and development of its forest industries. The Australian and Tasmanian governments recognise the importance of communicating these outcomes to all Australians concerned about our forests and forest industries.

In 'A Sustainable Future for Tasmania', the Australian Government agreed to commit \$200,000 to increase awareness in our communities about how our forests, and the plants and animals within the forest, are protected through our reserve systems and through careful forestry practices. Following discussions with the Tasmanian Government, the Australian Government's commitment to communicating the new forest initiatives in Tasmania will be increased to \$2.2 million.

The communications program will highlight the significant initiatives contained in the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement and also improve community awareness and understanding of sustainable forest management and protection of forest values across Australia generally. It is not well understood or appreciated that Australia's track record on managing our forests in a sustainable manner and in preserving our important forest values is among the best in the world.

Most of Australia's highest-value conservation and production native forest estate is covered by regional forest agreements. The centrepieces of these agreements are comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve systems established using internationally acclaimed criteria. In addition, wood producers must comply with strict codes of practice and limits on harvesting levels in order to maintain the forest environment and ensure a sustainable supply of wood into the future.

Australia has a strong record of achievement in forest conservation and management and the communications program will ensure that this message is heard and understood much more widely.