

REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT
for the
EDEN REGION
of
NEW SOUTH WALES

*Progress on the implementation of the
Regional Forest Agreement for the Eden Region*

1 July 2000 – 30 June 2001

ANNUAL REPORT

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Introduction

Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) are separate agreements between the Commonwealth Government and the State Governments of NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia. Based on good science and extensive consultation, the Agreements set out broad strategies to achieve a balance between conservation and a sustainable and competitive forest industry. They are in place for 20 years. RFAs are subject to annual reporting during the first four years and thereafter five-yearly reviews, to report progress against milestones and recommend action where necessary.

In NSW there are three RFAs in place covering the North East, Eden and Southern regions. The Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard MP and the Premier of New South Wales, the Hon Bob Carr MP, signed the Agreement for the Eden region on 25 August 1999. An interim progress report was prepared in September 2001 covering the period 25 August 1999 to 30 April 2001.

In order to align the reporting timelines for RFA annual reports and NSW Forest Agreements, the State and Commonwealth Governments (the Parties) agreed to change the Eden RFA reporting date to a financial year basis. This report therefore covers the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001. As a result, there is some overlap in reporting. Progress made during the period 30 April to 30 June 2001 is noted in this report.

To date, implementation of the Eden RFA has focused on preparatory tasks, with participating NSW agencies setting up processes and procedures for achieving the requirements set out in the Agreement, including the delivery of public reports. This has required a considerable amount of 'ground work' to establish the systems and processes for proper implementation. Consequently, progress towards some milestones has been slower than expected.

The Parties are continuing to work towards achieving a balance between a sustainable timber industry and the conservation of forested areas.

Progress on Milestones

NOTE: All references to NSW government agencies are as they were established during 2000/2001

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation
6	The Parties to determine the process for extending the Agreement for a further period.	3 rd Five yearly review	This does not need to be considered until the third five year review.
17	The Parties to develop and consider regional development initiatives to be funded from unspent Commonwealth and State funds committed under the South East Forest Agreement.	Within six months of signing	Unspent Commonwealth South East Forest Agreement (SEFA) funds (\$3.6 million) have been committed to the Eden Region Adjustment Package, which was announced on 26 November 1999. No uncommitted funds remain under SEFA.
37	Parties to report annually on the achievement of milestones in this Agreement.	Annually for first five years	An interim report was provided in 2001, covering the period 25 August 1999 to 30 April 2001. This is the first annual report covering the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001. Reporting on the Eden and North East Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) is now aligned to cover a financial year and with reporting for the NSW forest agreements.
40	The parties to determine the mechanism for the five-year review.	Before the end of the five-year review period	Initial discussions between the State and Commonwealth were held in January 2001, with more regular discussions to take place from late 2002. State agencies meet every two months to discuss various issues regarding the RFAs, NSW forest agreements and integrated forestry operations approvals (IFOA), including the review and the need for agencies to provide any relevant information. In preparation for the five year review, the State is initiating a system to retain information and implementing strategies for data generation and retention.
46(b)	New South Wales to complete and publish plans of management of areas dedicated under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> (NSW).	1 January 2002	The development of plans of management for national parks are being completed progressively. At 30 June 2001, of the 20 national parks/nature reserves/historic sites in the Eden region, eight had plans of management adopted by the NSW Minister for the Environment (including one which was being revised). A further three plans were in preparation (including one which had already been publicly exhibited). Management plans can be viewed on the NPWS website: http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au .

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation
46(c)	New South Wales to complete and publish a Regional ESFM Plan for State forests.	1 April 2000	<p>The draft Regional Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management (ESFM) Plan was displayed for public comment in September 2000. The plans included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable for preparation of working plans for flora reserves. • Strategy for management of informal reserves and areas managed by prescription within State forests. • Policy on Aboriginal input into forest management. <p>The plans are to be finalised following consideration of public comment and discussions with regulatory agencies.</p>
46(d)	New South Wales to implement the Forest Management Zoning system for the Eden region.	1 October 1999	<p>Public announcement of Forest Management Zones (FMZ) and release of the document 'Managing our Forests Sustainably: Forest Management Zoning in NSW State Forests' occurred in March 1999¹. Maps displaying the proposed FMZs were placed on public display with the draft Regional ESFM Plans in September 2000. These maps define areas of State forest which are to be managed for conservation purposes and those to be managed for timber production.</p> <p>The system is now being progressively implemented across State forests in the region.</p>
46(f)	New South Wales to develop and implement an inventory system for regrowth forests and review the calculation of Sustainable Yield, using methods consistent with Attachment 11 and the principles and processes used in the Forest Resource and Management Evaluation System (FRAMES).	In time for the first five-yearly review	Inventory and review program under development.
46(g)	New South Wales to grant an Integrated Forestry Operations Approval covering the Eden region.	Within three months of signing	The IFOA for the Eden region was granted on 21 December 1999.

¹ Announcement was incorrectly referenced in the Interim reports as March 2000.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation
46(h)	New South Wales to develop and implement environmental management systems.	Within five years of signing	<p>Development of an environmental management system (EMS) at the NPWS is scheduled for completion in April 2004. A project has been established to achieve this and a draft has been circulated internally. The EMS is now being expanded to cover all areas of NPWS operations.</p> <p>State Forests of NSW (SFNSW) is developing an EMS to assist in the continuous improvement of environmental management in native and planted forests. The EMS is a comprehensive planning, assessment, implementation, monitoring, auditing and reporting system which details how SFNSW is implementing ESFM on its native and planted forest estate.</p> <p>A draft overview of the Native Forest Management System (NFMS), developed as part of the EMS, was placed on display in September 2000.</p> <p>The development of the EMS is continuing so it meets ISO 14001 standard.</p>
49	New South Wales to report annually to Parliament on compliance with any <i>Integrated Forestry Operations Approval</i> for the Eden region and the New South Wales <i>Eden Forest Agreement</i> , and to furnish a copy to the Commonwealth.	Annually from 1999	<p>Reporting on compliance with the IFOAs has been incorporated into the NSW Forest Agreement Annual Report, which is completed on a financial year basis [refer milestone Att 5 Point 2 (i)].</p> <p>The first annual report is complete, and covers compliance on IFOAs for the period 1 January 2000 to 30 June 2000 and achievement of milestones in the NSW forest agreements from 5 March 1999 to 30 June 2000.</p> <p>The second annual report for 2000/2001 covers compliance with the IFOA for the Eden region for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2000.</p> <p>Future reporting will continue on a financial year basis.</p>

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation
52(d)	Both Parties to further develop, review, and if necessary revise Sustainability Indicators.	In time for the first five-yearly review	<p>The ESFM criteria and indicators (sustainability indicators) referred to in clause 47 of the RFA, and described in Table 1 and Attachment 9 of the NSW Forest Agreement for the Eden region, have been developed, consistent with the Montreal process criteria.</p> <p>The parties are continuing to undertake activities to monitor progress on implementation of the regional indicators and review and revise them as appropriate. This includes ongoing liaison between NSW agencies to further develop and refine monitoring and reporting processes.</p> <p>The NSW Forest Agreement Annual Reports contain summaries of the data and information collected for the indicators for the Upper North East, Lower North East and Eden regions. Further details are contained in the <i>ESFM Criteria and Indicators Annual Reports</i>.</p> <p>An evaluation of the indicators will be made at the five year review of the NSW forest agreements using the evaluation framework.</p>
56	New South Wales to produce a code of practice for timber harvesting of native forest on private lands.	By the first five-yearly review	A 'Draft Interim Best Operating Standards for Harvesting of Private Native Forests', under <i>Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997</i> has been prepared and will replace the existing draft Best Management Principles and other standards used by vegetation officers. Further agency and stakeholder meetings are to be held to finalise the Standards.
86	New South Wales to review legislation and policies relevant to the allocation and pricing of hardwood logs from State forests as part of the Competition Principles Agreement.	Before the end of 1999	<p>During 1999, in accordance with the scheduled review of SFNSW's log pricing policy, the final phase of amendments were made to the Log Value Pricing System to update assumptions within the residual value pricing model and remove anomalies. These amendments included the removal of the remaining 10% capping of price variations in relevant pricing zones. The log value pricing system was also expanded to include the linkage of small sawlog prices to quota sawlog prices. The main objective of the final stage of the implementation of Log Value Pricing was to create a closer consistency of hardwood sawlog prices with market value.</p> <p>This milestone is now complete.</p>
87	New South Wales to establish a Research Liaison Committee and publish a list of research priorities.	Within 12 months of signing	<p>The Committee was formed in October 2000, and held its first meeting in November 2000. The Committee includes representatives from NPWS, the Department of Land and Water Conservation, PlanningNSW and SFNSW.</p> <p>Representatives are currently identifying current research being undertaken by their agency and other non-government groups and universities.</p>
89 and 91	New South Wales to prepare a Compendium of New South Wales Forest Research.	By the first five-yearly review	The task has been identified as being required by the five year review. The Research Liaison Committee is to over see the completion of this task.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation
92 and 93	New South Wales and the Commonwealth to develop a data agreement and lodge archival copies of data.	Within six months of signing	Data agreement finalised in March 2000, and attached to the North East Region RFA (Attachment 13). The agreement is also applicable to Eden. A joint State/Commonwealth archive is being finalised. This is expected to be complete by July 2001.
Att 1 Point 4	New South Wales to prepare plans of management for Crown Reserves.	1 January 2002	Plans of management are to be prepared progressively pending clarification of legal issues, which is currently underway between the NPWS and the Department of Land and Water Conservation. A Memorandum of Understanding regarding the management of Crown Reserves was signed 26 March 2001 between the Directors-General of NPWS and the Department of Mineral Resources.
Att 1 Point 7	New South Wales to establish all Dedicated Reserve and Informal Reserve components of the CAR Reserve System.	Within six months of signing	All national parks, nature reserves and Crown reserves have been created by the <i>Forestry and National Park Estate Act 1998</i> . Flora reserves were created by the <i>Forestry and National Park Estate Act</i> and the identification of informal reserves on State forests is complete. Administrative steps to create FMZ 2 and 3a are underway.
Att 2 Table 1	New South Wales to develop Recovery Plans for species listed in Table 1.	Within five years of signing	Recovery plans are being prepared progressively by NPWS. At 30 June 2001, preparation of 21 of the 24 recovery plans listed was underway. Nine plans had been completed pending public exhibition, two plans had been approved, and ten were being prepared. <i>Note: 'complete' means the draft is complete and ready for public exhibition. Plans are not final until they have been approved by the NSW Minister for the Environment and may change in response to public submissions received during exhibition.</i> Recovery plans can be viewed on the NPWS website: http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au .

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation
Att 3 Point 8	Both Parties to finalise Statewide Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Heritage Values and Places.	End of 1999	<p>Statewide Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Heritage Values and Places were contained in the reports entitled <i>Protective Mechanisms for Cultural Heritage – Generic Version</i>, <i>Protective Mechanisms for Cultural Heritage – Lower North East Region</i> and <i>Protective Mechanisms for Cultural Heritage – Southern Region</i>. These reports were developed by both parties in the comprehensive regional assessment process by the Cultural Heritage Working Group.</p> <p>The Commonwealth Government has reviewed the above reports and considered the guidelines for the different regions as sufficiently consistent to be considered Statewide guidelines.</p> <p>SFNSW heritage guidelines have been developed with reference to the reports and are attached to the Eden IFOA. The guidelines describe planning, operation, monitoring and review processes for managing cultural heritage.</p> <p>NPWS are reviewing its current cultural heritage guidelines with reference to the above reports.</p>
Att 5 Point 1(p)	New South Wales to publish a State of Parks report.	April 2000	<p>The Report is to be finalised for release in October 2001.</p> <p>Completion of report was deferred to 2001 as reflected in the North East RFA.</p>
Att 5 Point 2(b)	New South Wales to publish the document Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management for the Eden RFA Assessment.	Within six months of signing	The report is complete and publicly available in the PlanningNSW Library.
Att 5 Point 2(c)	New South Wales to document the basis for silvicultural practices and publish silvicultural guidelines for commercial forest types.	31 March 2000	SFNSW have published a <i>Native Forests Silviculture Manual</i> that complements its Field Guides and training programs. The Manual documents the basis for SFNSW's silvicultural practices and contains the silvicultural specifications and guidelines required by the NSW Forest Agreements and IFOAs.
Att 5 Point 2(d)	New South Wales to publish the results from the Yambulla and Tantawangalo Research Catchments.	By the year 2000	Studies were published in the <i>Forestry Ecology Management Journal 2001</i> . The data from these studies has been applied to further research.
Att 5 Point 2(e)	New South Wales to publish the results from the Eden Burning Study.	By the first five-yearly review	Draft has been completed by SFNSW, but is currently undergoing an intensive internal review prior to finalisation.
Att 5 Point 2(f)	New South Wales to document and publish a description of the NSW Forest Management System covering Public and Private Lands.	In time for the first five-yearly review	The approach will build on and update the overviews of NSW agencies contained in the CRA/RFA report entitled <i>Description of Management Systems and Processes for Achieving Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management in NSW</i> . Requirements to complete this task are to be discussed.
Att 5 Point 2(g)	New South Wales to publish a description of the FRAMES system referred to in clause 46(f).	Within three months of signing	Completed and incorporated into the Forest Resource and Management Evaluation System (FRAMES) technical report for the Eden region.

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation
Att 5 Point 2(i)	New South Wales to table in each House of Parliament an annual report on the New South Wales <i>Eden Region Forest Agreement</i> in accordance with the <i>Forestry and National Park Estate Act 1998</i> (NSW) which will include an ESFM report and the outcomes of compliance with any Integrated Forestry Operations Approval for the region.	Annually from 1999	<p>The first annual report on the NSW forest agreements and compliance with the IFOAs covers the forest agreements for the Eden, Upper North East and Lower North East regions and provides progress on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of milestones specified in the forest agreements from March 1999 to 30 June 2000. • Monitoring of ESFM criteria and indicators by SFNSW (for the period 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000) and the NPWS (for the period from 1 January 1999 to 31 December 1999). • Compliance with the integrated forestry operations approvals from 1 January 2000 to 30 June 2000. • Discussion on significant achievements. <p>The report has subsequently been tabled in State Parliament.</p> <p>The report for 2000/2001 provides progress for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001.</p> <p>A complimentary report on the monitoring of the ESFM criteria and indicators (sustainability indicators) is also prepared annually, providing greater detail on the data and information collected for the indicators. Refer milestone under Clause 52(d).</p> <p>Subsequent annual reports will cover a financial year for all these aspects.</p>
Att 7 Point 12	New South Wales to incorporate codes of practice [<i>sic provisions</i>] that address bush and other fires within Regional ESFM Plans and plans of management for areas dedicated under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> (NSW).	By the first five-yearly review	<p>Addressed through District Fire Committees under <i>Rural Fires Act 1997</i> where consideration of these values is undertaken prior to finalisation of District Hazard Reduction Plans.</p> <p>Bushfire management is also addressed through NPWS plans of management. ESFM principles are also being incorporated into bushfire risk management plans.</p>
Att 7 Point 13	New South Wales to establishing a process, including public reporting, for regular audits of compliance and reviews of Codes of Practice, Eco-field Guides and Regional Prescriptions.	December 2002	<p>An overview of the process was included in the SFNSW draft NFMS which was displayed for public comment in September 2000.</p> <p>The NPWS are developing a strategy to enable proactive investigation and auditing of compliance with the Threatened Species Licence. In the mean time NPWS is continuing to record incidents of non-compliance reported by SFNSW, investigate all reports and allegations of non-compliance and take appropriate actions where necessary. At 30 June 2001, no complaints or reports of non-compliance had been received.</p>

Clause	Milestone	Timeline	Implementation
Att 7 Point 13	New South Wales to undertake audits as described above.	By the first and subsequent five-yearly reviews of the Agreement	<p>NPWS assess compliance with the Threatened Species Licence by recording incidents of non-compliance under condition 4.1, and by investigating any reports and allegations of non-compliance. A draft compliance monitoring and audit strategy has been developed.</p> <p>SFNSW are reviewing Forest Practices Code 1 and 2. A four-tiered audit, monitoring and measuring policy is being implemented in native forest areas. A policy for planted forest areas is under development.</p> <p>During 2000/2001, SFNSW completed 25 020 compliance checks for the Eden region, which identified 417 incidents of non-compliance of conditions. Of these incidents 223 (54%) were related to soil erosion and water quality, 172 (41%) to flora and fauna, nil were related to fish habitat and passage, and 22 (5%) to other issues such as safety.</p> <p>During the same period, the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) conducted three comprehensive audits on State forests assessing SFNSW's operational and planning requirements under the Environment Protection Licence. Results of these audits identified 34 breaches of the operational requirements of the Licence and warning letters were issued. Remedial work was also required for operational issues on non-compliance in 17 locations.</p>
Att 1 Point 1	The Parties to commission, complete and publish a review of the systems and processes used, and the Sustainable Yield calculated from Public Land as a result of the New South Wales review of Sustainable Yield described in clause 46(f).	By the first five-yearly review	Milestone not yet due but is under development.
Att 1 Point 2	New South Wales to undertake, complete and publish independent audits of Sustainable Yield.	In time for the second and subsequent five-yearly review	Milestone not yet due but approach is being considered.
Att 11 Point 5	New South Wales to establish a continuous FRAMES development program for the Eden region consistent with the Statewide FRAMES.	By the first five-yearly review	Milestone not yet due but is under development.

Acronyms

CAR reserve system	comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system
CRA/RFA	Comprehensive Regional Assessment/Regional Forest Assessment
EMS	Environmental Management System
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
ESFM	Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management
FMZ	Forest Management Zone
FRAMES	Forest Resource and Management System
IFOA	Integrated Forestry Operations Approval
NFMS	Native Forest Management System
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
RFA	regional forest agreement
SEFA	South East Forest Agreement
SFNSW	State Forests of NSW