

Submission to Draft Report on Progress with Implementation
of NSW Regional Forest Agreements

Vince Phillips, the Corporate Affairs Manager for South East Fibre Exports P/L (SEFE), has forwarded a detailed submission on the Draft Report on Progress with Implementation of NSW RFA.

In his submission Mr Phillips covers the key environmental and economic outcomes since the Eden and Southern RFAs were signed. This submission briefly makes some personal recommendations to the underlying structure of the RFAs going forward with reference to Attachment 9 of the Eden RFA –“Criteria, Indicators, Targets and Monitoring Processes of Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management for the Eden RFA”

The RFAs sought to provide a balance between conservation and sustainable use of forest resources, and in relation to the Eden RFA this has largely been achieved.

The existence of an RFA has taken much of the “heat” out of the environmental debate, and greatly reduced the incidence of ad hoc conflict at the compartment or forest level.

The Eden and Southern RFAs have underwritten in \$105 million in new investment in the native forest timber harvesting and processing sectors in the last decade.

The resource security afforded by the Eden RFA has seen a slight increase in the number of Equivalent Full Time jobs in the Primary Processing sector (170EFT in 199/2000 to 221 EFT in 2009).

Comments on Attachment 9 Eden RFA:-

A. Indicator 1.3 Habitat conservation and management measures

Monitoring and reporting requirements are limited to the current FNSW land resource rather than the 37,000 ha of new National Park created in Eden in 1999.
Recommendation - An objective review of the efficacy of the RFA with regards to endangered species, pest and weed species outcomes and fire impacts should apply to all public land tenures (older NP, recently created reserves plus State Forests)

B. Indicator 2.1g Area of Forest effectively regenerated

Target here was 100% effective regeneration but no regeneration surveys are being conducted.

High altitude mixed species forests are often difficult to regenerate.

Recommendation – monitor past/current regeneration and employ site preparation/seeding or enrichment planting to return a maximum amount of forest to a commercially productive state.

C. Criterion 5 Carbon Cycles

Recommendation - Factor in the reduction in carbon emissions through use of native forest biomass as a substitute for fossil fuel usage for power generation.
Remove all biomass eligibility barriers apart from environmental sustainability.

D. Criterion 6 Socio-economic benefits

Target was to increase the number of forest related jobs.

Recommendation – no further creation of reserves

- recognition of the real cost to FNSW of Community Service Obligations (CSO) in areas of fire fighting, feral animals, wildlife management, roads used by public. Compensation to FNSW at real cost levels would maintain employment and provide human fire fighting resources.

E. Indicator 6.5 Gross income related to forests

Recommendation – investigate possible increase in forest related income/employment through harvesting and processing of forest residues/woody biomass in strategic asset protection zones, as an alternative to frequent control burning.

Thank you

Peter Mitchell