

**Joint Australian and Tasmanian
Government Response
to the**

**“Second Five Yearly Review of Progress with Implementation of
the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement”**

January 2010

Joint Australian and Tasmanian Government Response to the Second Five Yearly Review of Progress with Implementation of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement.

Preface

The Commonwealth and Tasmanian Governments (the Parties) signed the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) in 1997. The RFA extends until 2017. The RFA provides for the sustainable management of Tasmania's forests and the development of forest industry in the State. A supplement to the RFA - the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (TCFA) - was signed in May 2005.

The Parties remain committed to the RFA and the TCFA as the bilateral framework for the sustainable management and use of Tasmania's forests.

As part of the RFA and TCFA, the Parties made a range of commitments to support the outcomes and objectives of the RFA. They also agreed to undertake five yearly reviews of progress with implementation of these commitments.

The first Review was undertaken in 2002 and the second was completed in 2008. Both Reviews, undertaken by independent reviewers, took account of public submissions. Both Reviews reported that the Parties had made substantial progress towards meeting agreed commitments and milestones. However, a small number of commitments were found to be incomplete or were behind the agreed milestones.

In addition, a number of matters were raised, particularly through public submissions, concerning contemporary or emerging issues such as climate change impacts and mitigation, and the management of water and fire that were not prominent in 1997. Consequently, both Reviews made recommendations to progress implementation of agreed commitments, and to further improve sustainable forest management and development of Tasmania's forests and forest industries.

The second RFA Review report was released on 13 March 2008 by the Hon. Tony Burke MP, the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Hon. Steven Kons MHA, the then Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure and Resources. The comprehensive report identified 43 specific recommendations.

The Review report is available at: http://daff.gov.au/rfa/publications/annual-reports/tasmania/tasmania_rfa_second_five_yearly_review

The Ministers jointly announced that the Parties agreed in principle with the recommendations in the report and stated that a formal response to the recommendations would be provided by the Parties after details of implementation had been considered.

The Parties have carefully considered the Review Report and this Joint Australian and Tasmanian Government Response to the Second Five Yearly Review of Progress with Implementation of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement provides the agreed detailed response to each of the Review's recommendations. Of note is that implementation of many of the recommendations has either commenced or have already been completed.

The Parties will continue to collaborate on implementation of the recommendations and will provide a detailed report on progress with implementation for the third RFA Review in 2012.

The Parties reconfirm their commitments to continuous improvement in Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management as envisaged by the National Forest Policy Statement and the RFA. The commitments in this response will ensure that Tasmania's forest management systems continue to adapt to reflect new information, priorities and community expectations.

Forest Practices System

Monitoring activities

Recommendation 1

That the State requests the Forest Practices Authority to review and report to the Parties on the procedures and practices the Forest Practices Authority follows to guarantee the independence and integrity of its monitoring and compliance functions and activities and any change that it proposes to those procedures and practices.

Response

The Tasmanian Government has requested the Forest Practices Authority to review and report to the Parties on the procedures and practices the Forest Practices Authority follows to guarantee the independence and integrity of its monitoring and compliance functions and activities and any change that it proposes to those procedures and practices.

The Forest Practices Authority has advised that it will undertake the review and report to both Parties during 2010, as a basis for ongoing consultations with the Parties to allow the Parties to meet their obligations under the RFA.

Availability of Forest Practices Plans

Recommendation 2

That the State further progresses improvements to the Forest Practices System by requesting the Forest Practices Authority to ensure that information is available from the forest practices planning process as follows:

- (a) Subject to appropriate non disclosure of personal or sensitive information such as any confidential location of protected sites (although the values to be protected should be identified), the content or draft content (if a request is made prior to the certification of the plan) of forest practices plans, should be disclosed to immediate neighbours as soon as possible after a request is made, at a location agreed between the applicant for the Forest Practices Plan and the neighbour concerned; and
- (b) Recognising the wider public interest in the ecologically sustainable management of Tasmania's forests, and subject to the non disclosure of the matters identified in (a) above, information on the values protected in any certified Forest Practices Plan and the manner of that protection, should be made available on request to any interested person, by ordinary mail or electronically.

Response

The Parties support this recommendation as a means of increasing transparency in the Forest Practices System.

The Tasmanian Government has requested the Forest Practices Authority to implement this recommendation. The Forest Practices Authority strongly supports this principle and has progressed implementation to ensure that non-confidential information contained in Forest Practices Plans is made available to neighbours and other interested members of the public in a timely manner. The Forest Practices Authority expects to finalise implementation in early 2010.

Forestry Tasmania currently makes information available for Forest Practices Plans on State forest consistent with this recommendation.

Relationship between the forest sector and its neighbours

Recommendation 3

That the Parties note the potential benefits that may follow from the review and implementation of the Good Neighbour Charter for commercial tree farming and implementation of a Good Neighbour Charter of wider scope and encourage the proposed signatories to the Charter to conclude the review as soon as possible, execute the charter and release it publicly.

Response

The review of the Good Neighbour Charter has been completed and the signatories (Forestry Tasmania, Gunns Ltd, Norske Skog Boyer Mills Ltd, Timberlands Pacific Pty Ltd, Forest Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd, and Great Southern Plantations Pty Ltd) released the Good Neighbour Charter for Commercial Forestry on 27 November 2008. The Parties welcome the Charter and recognise the importance of good relations between forest managers and neighbours, and note that the signatories have widened the scope of the Charter to apply to native commercial forestry as well as plantations.

The revised Charter is available at: <http://www.fiatas.com.au/index.php?id=297>

Recommendation 4

That the State consults with the signatories to the proposed Good Neighbour Charter with a view to encouraging the Charter signatories to establish a process for documenting and reporting on the effectiveness of the operational implementation of the Charter.

Response

The Tasmanian Government has consulted with the developers of the Good Neighbour Charter to inform them of this recommendation and seek their support for its implementation. Discussions between the Tasmanian Government Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, the Forest Industries Association of Tasmania and Forestry Tasmania have commenced.

Management Planning

Recommendation 5

That the State establishes a program, by 30 June 2008, to complete the preparation of management plans or a management regime for all national parks and other formal reserves managed under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*, including identifying the cost of the preparation of such plans.

Response

The Tasmanian Government has approved management plans covering 70 per cent of the area of reserves managed under the Tasmanian *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.

Management plans are in place for 16 of the State's 19 national parks. The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service has prepared a program to complete the preparation of a general management plan for the three national parks (Mt William, Rocky Cape and Savage River) that do not have a management plan.

A draft management plan for the Savage River National Park was prepared and placed on public exhibition. Completion of management planning for the remaining two national parks – Rocky Cape and Mount William - has been deferred due to Tasmanian Aboriginal community interest in these areas (see response to recommendations 7 and 8).

As well as national parks, there are approximately 60 State reserves, 78 nature reserves, 12 game reserves, 181 conservation areas, 23 nature recreation areas, 21 regional reserves and 29 historic sites reserved under the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002* and managed by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. Management plans have been prepared for only a small percentage of these reserves.

Due to the large number of these reserves, a “general management plan” is proposed to cover them all. The general management plan will include a summary of values of the reserve system as well as values and zoning maps for each reserve. The structure of the proposed general management plan is aligned with the three Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service operational regions: South, North and North West. The first draft general management plan covering reserves in all regions has been completed.

Recommendation 6

That the State resources the program to enable all the management plans or the management plan regime for all national parks and other formal reserves managed under the Tasmanian *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*, to be in place by 30 June 2010.

Response

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service is progressing a program to develop a general management plan to cover all reserves without specific management plans. The Tasmanian Government is committed to completing management plans for Mt William, Rocky Cape and Savage River National Parks as soon as practicably possible, noting that there are statutory timeframes required for public consultation, review and approval processes, and that there are ongoing discussions with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community who have an interest in these reserves. The target date for completion of this work is June 2011.

Completed management plans can be viewed at:
<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=5957>

Recommendation 7

That where management plans are to be prepared for national parks or other formal reserves which involve matters to be resolved in negotiations with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, those negotiations should be subject to an appropriate timetable to achieve resolution prior to 30 June 2009.

Response

The Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment will continue to negotiate an approach and program for the completion of management plans with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community with the aim of achieving resolution during 2010.

Recommendation 8

That any matters covered by the management plan for those national parks or other formal reserves that can be progressed concurrently with negotiations with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community should be progressed in accordance with the program referred to above.

Response

The Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment is progressing the completion of management plans in accordance with the program developed in response to Recommendation 6 above.

Reserve Management

Recommendation 9

That the Parties, as a minimum, maintain annual funding in real terms for management of all the values of the reserve system in Tasmania and consider increasing the resources available to meet the management needs resulting from the expansion to the reserve system directly resulting from the RFA and the TCFA.

Response

The Parties will continue to provide funds to support those reserves covered by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan.

The Tasmanian Government will continue to fund the Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative reserve system, consistent with relevant commitments under the RFA and the TCFA, and the relevant management objectives for each element of the reserve system.

Recommendation 10

That the State ensures the conduct of audits of compliance with the Tasmanian *Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003* and the publication of the outcomes of those audits for financial year 2008-09 and thereafter.

Response

Forestry Tasmania has conducted audits of compliance with the Tasmanian *Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003* for a number of recently completed activities in forest reserves and has published the results in its 2007-08 Sustainable Forest Management Report. The report is available at:

<http://www.forestrytas.com.au/publications/sustainable-forest-management>

The Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, the Environment and Water has completed a major upgrade of its internal environmental impact assessment system – the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) system. The RAA system is now operational for all reserves managed under the Tasmanian *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*. The Tasmanian Government will extend audits of compliance with the Tasmanian *Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003*, to lands managed under the Tasmanian *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* and will aim to commence reporting of compliance for the 2010-2011 year.

Recommendation 11

That the Parties request the Forest Practices Authority to include, as part of the current review of the Forest Practices Code, a review of current mechanisms for ensuring that forest harvesting operations do not impact on the integrity of the boundaries of formal reserves.

Response

The Tasmanian Government has requested the Forest Practices Authority to implement this recommendation.

The Forest Practices Authority has advised that it will include a review of mechanisms for ensuring that forest harvesting operations do not impact on the integrity of the boundaries of formal reserves as part of the current review of the Forest Practices Code.

It is planned that there will be a public exposure draft of the revised Tasmanian Forest Practices Code available in late 2010.

Threatened Species and Communities

Recommendation 12

That the Parties progressively prepare and publish Listing Statements or Advice, including conservation advice, for all forest-related threatened species. Priority should be given to completing Listing Statements for all endangered forest-related species by no later than the end of 2008. Listing Statements or Advice should also be prepared for all newly listed species at the time of listing.

Response

The Parties will continue to prepare Listing Statements and Conservation Advice for all nationally listed threatened species, in accordance with the processes required by Sections 194Q and 266B of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*. Since 2009, the Tasmanian Government has prepared Listing Statements for all newly listed species at the time of listing.

The Parties encourage the nomination of any forest-related threatened species that are yet to be listed under State or Commonwealth legislation.

Recommendation 13

That the Parties make the Listing Statements or Advice publicly available on an appropriate internet site as each is completed.

Response

Both Parties will maintain the current practice of publishing Listing Statements or Conservation Advice on their respective websites as each is completed.

All listing statements and Conservation Advice for species and ecological communities listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* are currently available at: www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/sprat.pl

The Australian Government will continue to regularly publish this information online in accordance with the processes required by Section 266B of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

All listing statements for species listed under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* are available on the Tasmanian Government's Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment website at:

www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/SJON-58E2VD?open#ListingStatements

Recommendation 14

That the Parties continue to complete Recovery Plans for forest-related endangered species, in accordance with the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*, but that priority in terms of time and resources should be given to the Recovery Plans already in preparation and the Listing Statement or Advice process referred to above.

Response

The Parties are continuing to complete Recovery Plans for forest-related endangered species, with the priority being on those plans already in preparation, and Listing Statements and Conservation Advice for forest-related endangered species. There are currently 13 Recovery Plans being developed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and three under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*. These are planned for completion by August 2010.

The Parties will continue to support and implement endorsed Recovery Plans for species listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Recommendation 15

That the Parties review the commitments under the RFA for lists of Priority Species with a view to removing duplication and ensuring consistency with lists required under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*. An up-to-date list of forest-related threatened species and communities that include the RFA commitments should be publicly available on an appropriate internet site.

Response

The Parties will consult, including through the Species Information Partnership, on updating relevant commitments, definitions and Attachment 2 under the RFA for lists of Priority Species, to remove duplication and ensure consistency by the end of 2009. A list of Priority Species and recommended amendments which was prepared for the Second Five Yearly RFA Review is available on the Tasmanian Government's Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment website at:

<http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/LJEM-7VH9NV?open>.

An up-to-date list of Priority Species will be prepared by 2011, made available on the website, and will be further updated as species listing information changes.

Recommendation 16

That the State, in consultation with the Australian Government, reviews the processes used within the forest practices system for the protection and recovery of threatened species, in particular the annual independent monitoring and reporting of the application of management prescriptions for threatened species in the development and implementation of Forest Practices Plans.

Response

The Parties recognise the importance of ongoing monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of management prescriptions for threatened species.

An independent expert panel has finalised a review for the Forest Practices Authority of the biodiversity provisions of the Forest Practices Code. This includes a review of the processes used within the forest practices system for the management of threatened species within wood production forests. The report entitled “Review of the biodiversity provisions of the Tasmanian Forest Practices Code” is available at:

[http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/index.php?id=40&tx_mininews_pi1\[showUid\]=30&cHash=9c6346860f](http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/index.php?id=40&tx_mininews_pi1[showUid]=30&cHash=9c6346860f)

The Forest Practices Authority has advised that it will report to both Parties on this review by 2010, as a basis for ongoing consultations with the Parties on the protection and recovery of threatened species, to allow the Parties to meet their obligations under the RFA.

Recommendation 17

That the Parties continue to improve knowledge of threatened species and threatened communities and the efficacy of existing management prescriptions in protecting those species. This should include explicit monitoring programs, which might be general or for specific species or a combination of both. Priorities for monitoring should be reviewed annually, taking into account the regular threatened species and communities monitoring process undertaken in the forest practices system, with priorities being determined cognisant of current threatening processes, development pressures and relevant government policies.

Response

The Parties are committed to a process of continuous improvement in relation to the scientific knowledge of, and efficacy monitoring for, threatened species and threatened communities.

In particular, the Parties recognise the importance of a strategic approach to the management of threatened species habitat, a systematic approach to the management of and monitoring of changes in threatened species habitat.

The Parties agree to continue to work collaboratively to progress these approaches with priorities being determined cognisant of current threatening processes, development pressures and relevant government policies.

Recommendation 18

That the Parties consider the need to amend the RFA to reflect the 2006 amendments to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* which require the existence of conservation advice for all threatened species and communities and which enables the exercise of Ministerial discretion in relation to the preparation of recovery plans.

Response

The Parties agree to consider the need to amend the RFA to reflect the 2006 amendments to the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and will further discuss a package of amendments to the RFA to implement this recommendation along with recommendations 31 and 39.

Integrated Catchment Management

Recommendation 19

That the State completes Water Management Plans under the *Water Management Act 1999* in accordance with its commitments under the National Water Initiative Implementation Plan.

Response

The Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment is progressing Water Management Plans from 2007-09, consistent with the commitments and timelines under the National Water Initiative and Tasmania's Implementation Plan. The Plan is set out in Tasmania's Implementation Plan for the National Water Initiative, which is available on the Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment website at:

<http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/JMUY-6R78TG?open>

The Parties note that the Council of Australian Governments has agreed to consider accelerating National Water Initiative commitments. The Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment has a program in place for completion of Water Management Plans in accordance with its National Water Initiative commitments.

Recommendation 20

That the State, as a matter of priority, continues to invest in research into the impacts of forestry practices on hydrological cycles in Tasmanian catchments, including improved models at catchment levels, as well as improved data and catchment planning processes. The research should be undertaken in collaboration with other research organisations and independent experts and the State should put measures in place to ensure that relevant data on current and proposed plantation establishment and operations is readily available for the work.

Response

The Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment will consider new information on the impact of forestry practices on hydrological processes, and its incorporation into catchment models and water planning processes.

Forestry Tasmania maintains an active forest hydrology research program, partly supported by Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement funds for at least five years. Research is undertaken in partnership with the CRC for Forestry. Outcomes from research undertaken by Forestry Tasmania with relevant organisations and researchers will be published.

Data on the existing extent of plantations are published annually on the Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment LIST database. Data on current and proposed plantation harvesting are provided to the Forest Practices Authority annually in Three Year Wood Production Plans.

Forestry Tasmania's Three Year Wood Production Plan is available on the Forestry Tasmania website at <http://www.forestrytas.com.au/forest-management/3yp>

The Forest Practices Authority is currently investigating the feasibility of placing Three Year Wood Production Plans covering private land on their website.

The Parties note commitments made under the National Water Initiative and the work of the Council of Australian Governments' Working Group on Climate Change and Water.

Recommendation 21

That the State completes the development of its computer model for impacts of forestry practices on hydrological cycles in Tasmanian catchments that include prediction of the impact of forest-based activities on catchment water availability.

Response

The Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment has completed the development of the Water Availability and Forest Land Use Planning Tool. This model builds on the TasLUCaS model for predicting the impact of vegetation change on hydrological cycles, and provides quantitative information on a daily timestep.

The Parties note commitments made under the National Water Initiative and the work of the Council of Australian Governments' Working Group on Climate Change and Water.

Recommendation 22

That the State ensures that the wider community is able to access information on the methodology that supports the operation of the model, that there are public opportunities for exchange of information and sharing of opinions in relation to the operation of the model, and that the outcomes of the application of the model to catchments are disclosed and reported on a regular basis.

Response

The Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment has prepared a report on the development of the Water Availability and Forest Land Use Planning Tool, and its initial application in the Ringarooma catchment. This report has been publicly released, together with the independent reviews undertaken by two external experts, and the technical report prepared by the consultant who undertook the Water Availability and Forest Land Use Planning Tool (WAFL) development. The reports are available on the Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment website at:

<http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/CGRM-7KL4RA?open>

The Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment will report on the outcomes of the application of the model to catchments as assessments are undertaken. It is expected that the application of the WAFL to relevant catchments will be completed following consideration of the outcomes of the CSIRO Tasmanian Sustainable Yields Project.

The CSIRO Tasmanian Sustainable Yields Project will be completed and reported upon in January 2010. The project will be providing a broad estimate of the hydrological impact of plantation water interception on catchment yields under a number of different scenarios, and will indicate where further application of the WAFL may be required. Information about the CSIRO Sustainable Yield's Project is available at:

<http://www.csiro.au/partnerships/TasSY.html>

For relevant catchments, the findings from the WAFL's application will be incorporated into the water planning process as required under the National Water Initiative. Further opportunity for the exchange of information and sharing of opinions in relation to the operation of the WAFL will be provided through the stakeholder consultation processes as part of the development of water plans.

The Parties note commitments made under the National Water Initiative and the work of the Council of Australian Governments' Working Group on Climate Change and Water.

Recommendation 23

That the State ensures that its Water Management Planning framework appropriately provides for a risk-based approach to management of water interception and extraction activities in accordance with the requirements of the National Water Initiative.

Response

The Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment has adopted a risk-based approach to the management of water interception and extraction activities. Risk assessments using the model to assess the impacts of plantation forest interception have been undertaken in relevant Tasmanian catchments over 2008-09, and the results have been incorporated into water planning processes as a priority.

The Parties note commitments made under the National Water Initiative and the work of the Council of Australian Governments' Working Group on Climate Change and Water.

Recommendation 24

That the State requests the Forest Practices Authority to consider, in the current review of the Forest Practices Code, the inclusion of measures to enable the management of the impacts of forest practices on the yield of water in catchments, so as to meet objectives of Water Management Plans.

Response

The Tasmanian Government has requested the Forest Practices Authority to implement this recommendation.

In recognition of this, the Forest Practices Authority will implement this recommendation as part of the current review of the Forest Practices Code. The review will include consideration of the State's water management framework commitments under the National Water Initiative, as the basis for the development of an appropriate regulatory framework to support implementation at an operation level.

The Parties note commitments made under the National Water Initiative and the work of the Council of Australian Governments' Working Group on Climate Change and Water.

Environmental Management Systems and Forest Certification

Recommendation 25

That the State completes the development of an environmental management system for all reserves under the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002* by 30 June 2009 and that the resources required to achieve implementation be allocated to enable implementation as soon as possible thereafter.

Response

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service has completed the first major component of an Environmental Management System – an upgraded environmental impact assessment process for reserve activities (the Reserve Activity Assessment system). This system provides a robust assessment of impacts on reserve values of existing and proposed activities. It enables

development of measures to avoid or mitigate any identified undesirable impacts as well as providing additional conservation benefits in reserves.

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service has developed a range of other management and business processes and procedures over the past 10 years that provide similar benefits to those expected from an Environmental Management System. These include the Reserve Standards Framework, a component of the Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment Public Risk Policy, which is a strategic planning tool for the provision of visitor services. The Reserve Standards Framework underpins the Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment's public policy approach to risk management. There is a comprehensive walking track classification system, an occupational health and safety system, and fire management policies and guidelines.

The Tasmanian Government will aim to develop and implement the Environmental Management System for land managed under the Tasmanian *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* by June 2011.

Fire and Smoke Management

Recommendation 26

That the State ensures that the state-wide fire management policy framework that applies to all tenures across the State, takes account of the increase in the area of forest plantations since the last Review, the effect of drought and the potential impacts of climate change.

Response

A new State Fire Management Policy is being developed by the State Fire Management Council. Issues such as forestry plantations, the effect of drought and the potential impacts of climate change will be considered in the development of the policy. A draft policy has been considered by the State Fire Management Council and is being reviewed by stakeholders prior to finalisation.

Recommendation 27

That the State ensures that policies in the fire management policy framework on all tenures are made publicly available as the policies are confirmed or revised.

Response

The Tasmanian Government will ensure that policies in the fire management policy framework on all tenures are made publicly available on relevant websites as the policies are confirmed or revised.

The fire management policy framework prepared in 2006 is available at:

http://www.dier.tas.gov.au/forests/tasmanian_regional_forest_agreement_rfa#framework

Climate Change

Recommendation 28

That the Parties improve the collection and public reporting of relevant data to ensure that there is an improved understanding of the contribution, both positive and negative, that Tasmania's forests, forest management practices and the forestry sector generally, make to the global carbon balance and climate change issues.

Response

The Parties recognise the role of Tasmania's forests in mitigating climate change. The Parties are preparing for the impacts of climate change, including investigating climate change impacts on forests.

Development of a national climate change agenda is being driven by the Council of Australian Governments. The Primary Industries Ministerial Council, also acting on behalf of the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, endorsed the National Climate Change and Commercial Forestry Action Plan on 6 November 2009. This was developed in consultation with all States and Territories. In addition, for all forests including non-commercial forests, the Australian Government is undertaking a national climate change and forests vulnerability assessment again in consultation with all States and Territories.

The Australian Government is also developing the National Carbon Accounting System to provide comprehensive coverage of greenhouse gas emissions and removals in Australia's forests (including harvested wood products).

The Tasmanian Government recognises the importance of forests for sequestering carbon in its Tasmanian Framework for Action on Climate Change details of which can be found at: http://www.climatechange.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/57230/CC_Framework_fact_sheet.pdf

Implementing the Tasmanian Framework for Action on Climate Change will include consideration of and reporting on the role of forests in Tasmania's emissions and their contribution to emissions reduction.

Private Land Management

Recommendation 29

That the State recognises the importance of providing public information on the success or otherwise of forest regeneration, and requests the Forest Practices Authority to:

- (a) prepare a report on the success or otherwise of forest regeneration on private land on which native forest was harvested since the 2002 Review;
- (b) provide a comprehensive report on regeneration success or otherwise of forests on public and private land in its annual report; and
- (c) provide a consolidated report for consideration as part of the next five year Review.

Response

The Tasmanian Government recognises the importance of continuing to provide information on the forest practices system to all stakeholders, including improved information on the success or otherwise of forest regeneration activities on private land. In recognition of this, the Tasmanian Government has requested the Forest Practices Authority to implement this recommendation.

The Forest Practices Authority has advised it will implement this recommendation so that a consolidated report will be available for consideration as part of the third RFA review in 2012.

National Estate

Recommendation 30

That, notwithstanding changes in Commonwealth legislation, the Parties confirm their commitment to management of the national estate values as set out in Attachment 1 of the RFA for the duration of the RFA.

Response

The Parties reconfirm their commitment to the management of national estate values as set out in Attachment 1 of the RFA, for the duration of the RFA, consistent with their roles and responsibilities as set out in the 1997 Council of Australian Government agreement to rationalise Commonwealth-state heritage arrangements, and in subsequent Commonwealth-state agreements relating to heritage.

Recommendation 31

That the Parties consider amending the RFA to reflect the changes in the Commonwealth legislation related to the cessation of the national estate listing process. The Parties should consider including appropriate commitments to protect the values of any places listed on the National Heritage List in accordance with the Commonwealth legislation.

Response

The Parties agree to consider the need to amend the Tasmanian RFA to take into account changes in national legislation and processes and will further discuss a package of amendments to the RFA to implement this recommendation, along with recommendations 18 and 39.

Recommendation 32

That, given that the Register of the National Estate will not exist after 31 December 2011, the State examines the current places on the Register and determines whether any properties or values listed should be accorded any ongoing status and the nature of that status.

Response

Recalling the 1997 Council of Australian Governments' agreement to rationalise Commonwealth-state heritage arrangements and noting the transition period for the Register of the National Estate of 19 February 2007 to 18 February 2012, the Parties will aim to complete the transfer of the Register of the National Estate places to national and state heritage registers as appropriate.

All Tasmanian places of State significance on the Register of the National Estate for historic cultural heritage values are already included on relevant registers, are pending assessment or in the process of being assessed for listing.

The Tasmanian Government will aim to complete all Heritage Register entries of Register of the National Estate places by 31 December 2011, as part of the ongoing State-wide heritage survey implementation.

Information about the Tasmanian Heritage Register is available at <http://www.heritage.tas.gov.au/register.html>

Those Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage places that were previously on the Register of the National Estate have been incorporated into the State database.

Site specific natural values of places on the Register of the National Estate are already on relevant State natural value data bases at:

<http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/webpages/ljem-6tv6tv?open>

These values are also considered in relevant State planning processes.

Recommendation 33

That the State requests the Forest Practices Authority to revise the Forest Practices Archaeological Manual as soon as possible to address all matters other than Tasmanian Aboriginal heritage, and further revise that Manual, as required, to take account of the proposed Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage legislation when it is enacted.

Response

The Tasmanian Parliament is expected to consider new Aboriginal Heritage legislation in 2010.

The Tasmanian Government has requested the Forest Practices Authority to consider implementing this recommendation. The Forest Practices Authority has advised that in its current form, the historic cultural heritage section of the manual is not an impediment to appropriate management, and therefore its revision is not a high priority. The Forest Practices Authority intends to give priority to amending the manual, when the new Tasmanian Aboriginal legislation is approved by the Tasmanian Parliament.

Sustainable Yield

Recommendation 34

That the State ensures that Forestry Tasmania prepares and makes available its report on the review of sustainable high quality sawlog supply from State forests as part of the documentation released for public comment as part of the third RFA Review.

Response

Since the signing of the RFA in 1997, Forestry Tasmania has undertaken three reviews, in 1998, 2002 and 2007, reports from which were published. The 2007 report is available on the Forestry Tasmania website at:

<http://www.forestrytas.com.au/publications/sustainable-forest-management>

To meet relevant sustainable yield commitments under the RFA, Forestry Tasmania will continue to undertake and report on a review of sustainable high quality sawlog supply from State forests and will release relevant reports to enable public comment as part of the third RFA Review in 2012.

Recommendation 35

That the State, in consultation with the forest processing industry, reviews and identifies appropriate and measurable indicators that show the quality of sawlogs supplied to the processing sector, and determines the data to be reported and the responsibilities for collecting and reporting on the data.

Response

Forestry Tasmania will consult with the Forest Industries Association of Tasmania to determine priorities for review and to identify appropriate and measurable relevant indicators.

Forestry Tasmania will build on existing reporting processes, including the Annual Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Report (refer 2007-08 SFM Report Figs 9 and 10) which is available at: <http://www.forestrytas.com.au/uploads/File/publications/SFM.pdf>

Special Species

Recommendation 36

That the State completes the special timber species supply strategy by 30 September 2008, which should include information on the resource that remains available by species and the rate at which that resource will be available.

Response

Forestry Tasmania is implementing new resource planning, supply chain management and marketing/promotions initiatives consistent with the provisions of the RFA and TCFA. This has included a number of commissioned reports which are currently being finalised. These initiatives and reports have been integrated into a comprehensive and coherent strategy which will provide information on the resource, and more importantly, viable systems for improved value recovery and supply to market.

The draft Special Timbers Strategy was released by Forestry Tasmania for public comment on 31 July 2009 at:

<http://www.forestrytas.com.au/branchline/branchline-july-31-2009/draft-special-timbers-strategy-released-for-public-comment>

Following a one month consultation period, Forestry Tasmania expects to complete the Special Species Timber Strategy and publish it on its website in early 2010.

Resource Security

Recommendation 37

That the Parties commence the process of identifying the key issues relevant to considering the extension of the RFA in advance of the next RFA Review in 2012, so that an assessment of all the factors concerning desirability or otherwise of extending the RFA is available to the Review and is published as part of the next Review process. In particular, the progressive shortening of the period of industry resource security provided by the current RFA should be taken into account, together with operational and policy matters that were not prominent at the commencement of the RFA, such as catchment management and climate change.

Response

Consistent with the RFA, and as an important element of the National Forest Policy Statement, the process for extending the duration of the RFA will be considered by the Parties as part of the third RFA Review in 2012. Identification of key issues will be included when preparing for the next review.

RFA Attachment 12

Recommendation 38

That the Parties facilitate the preparation by industry of an updated development strategy for the industry, taking account of stakeholder views and the Forest and Forest Industry Strategy (1990), the RFA Employment and Industries Development Strategy, existing and future resource availability and industry developments, and emerging opportunities for new products and services.

Response

The Parties support the need to work with the forest industry to ensure it is internationally competitive and sustainable over the long term. The responsibility for developing such a strategy lies primarily with the industry.

The Tasmanian Government Minister for Energy and Resources has agreed to a proposal from the Forests and Forest Industry Council of Tasmania to coordinate the preparation of an updated industry development strategy. The Forests and Forest Industry Council of Tasmania is consulting with industry stakeholders, and expects to complete the strategy by the end of 2009. The Australian Government has agreed to provide relevant information for inclusion in the updated industry development strategy.

The Australian Government is also providing funding of \$8.04 million over three years from April 2008 for the establishment of the Forest and Forest Products Industry Skills Council, ForestWorks, and has announced the national Forest Industries Development Fund to develop value adding initiatives that improve the international competitiveness of Australia's forest products. Round 1 of the fund was finalised in April 2009 and Round 2 grants were finalised in November 2009.

In February 2009, a sub-committee of the Forest and Wood Products Council met to progress the topics of future priorities and industry strategy. A paper that was drafted by industry outlining a strategy was presented to full Council in May 2009. The issue will be further discussed at future meetings.

On 19 June 2009, the Australian Government Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, announced that a new Pulp and Paper Industry Strategy Group would be formed to undertake a review of the pulp and paper manufacturing industry in Australia. The Strategy Group was tasked with developing a plan to encourage innovation and attract investment in pulp and paper manufacturing in Australia. Members of the Strategy Group included senior representatives from the leading pulp and paper companies, unions, industry experts and all levels of government. On 21 August 2009, Senator Carr released the Strategy Group's Issues Paper which noted the industry's support for further expansion of Australia's plantation resources. The Strategy Group submitted a draft Pulp and Paper Industry Strategy to Senator Carr on 20 November 2009 and the group is expected to submit its final report by the end of March 2010.

Recommendation 39

That the Parties review Attachment 12 of the RFA with the following objectives:

- (a) to maintain the original focus and intent of enhancing employment and industry development in the forest and forest related sectors as is set out in Clause 72 and Attachment 12 of the RFA and the commitments in the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement;
- (b) to take account of current policies, available programs and potential opportunities with a view to making further appropriate commitments for the next ten years of the RFA; and

(c) to remove commitments already discharged or no longer relevant having regard to the preliminary examination of these matters as set out in Appendix 4 Table 1.

Response

The Parties agree to update and rationalise Attachment 12 of the RFA in advance of the third RFA Review in 2012 and agree that this should be done after completion of the Tasmanian forest industry development strategy (see recommendation 38).

Information and Education

Recommendation 40

That the Parties continue a program, in collaboration with industry stakeholders, of community education, information and awareness on the value of forests, the management of forests and the operation of the Forest Practices System in the pursuit of the ecologically sustainable management of forests, to assist the community to understand the issues associated with the management of forests for all values, particularly in light of climate change, biodiversity, catchment management and the domestic processing of wood products.

Response

The Parties recognise the value of community education, information and awareness on the value and management of forests.

The Tasmanian Government will continue a range of programs to improve community education, information and awareness, in collaboration with industry stakeholders. These include programs managed through the Forests and Forest Industry Council of Tasmania, Forestry Tasmania, the Forest Practices Authority and Private Forests Tasmania, and through continued support for the Forest Education Foundation.

The Australian Government will produce the State of the Forests Report and the State of the Environment Report as required by relevant policies and legislation. It will continue to contribute to relevant international fora such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

Apiculture

Recommendation 41

That the State completes the plan for the future of the Tasmanian apiary industry in consultation with the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association and forest industry sector.

Response

The Forests and Forest Industry Council of Tasmania has established an Apiary Working Group that includes representatives of the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association, public land managers and the forest industry. The Working Group has developed a draft plan for the future of the apiary industry as a concept document, recognising that its implementation requires resolution of commercial matters that can only be resolved through direct negotiation between beekeepers and land managers.

RFA and TCFA Financial and Performance Auditing

Recommendation 42

That the Parties should identify the major financial commitments established by the RFA, TCFA and any related financial commitments, to establish a program of independent financial and performance audits of the discharge of those commitments (which may include separate program evaluation) and the achievement of the outcomes sought as a result of those commitments. The Parties should prioritise the audits as considered appropriate. In particular, the audits should address the effectiveness of the programs for (i) protection of forest communities on private land, (ii) intensive forest management, and (iii) industry development and restructuring. Reports produced as a result of audits or evaluations should be published on their completion.

Response

The Parties note that it is part of sound governance to regularly audit programs funded under the RFA and TCFA.

The Parties agree to facilitate performance evaluations and audits of programs for (i) protection of forest communities on private land, (ii) intensive forest management, and (iii) industry development and restructuring, at their completion. The Parties will publish completed performance evaluations and audits on relevant government websites.

Monitoring and Reporting

Recommendation 43

That, given that Recommendation 5.1 of the 2002 Review stated “[T]hat the Parties, as a priority, develop a process, to obtain reliable data to inform social and economic indicators for the community, and the performance of forest based industries relevant to Attachment 12 of the RFA. The sustainability indicators relevant to the social and economic aspects of the industry need to be reviewed when such reliable data becomes available.”, recommendation 5.1 of the 2002 Review should be implemented by the Parties as a matter of high priority. The process should engage all relevant stakeholders in the identification of the data to be collected. This stage of the process should be completed by 30 September 2008. These data should be available to the next five year Review, and form part of the matters taken into account in the decision whether or not to extend the RFA.

Response

The Parties agree to continue to work together, and with industry and other relevant stakeholders, to improve the availability and reliability of social and economic data and indicators regarding the performance of forest based industries.

As part of the Australian Government’s forestry policy commitments, a Forestry Industry Database is being developed by URS Forestry that will address information to assist predicting future wood flows and industry needs. This will include the collation of comprehensive information about the resource, the workforce and its skills requirements; and developing a national database for the use of industry and government bodies. This work is due for completion by July 2010.

The Parties also note that the ongoing work of the CRC for Forestry is producing new data for some key elements, which are expected to improve further for the third RFA Review in 2012.

The Australian Government has engaged the Australian National University Fenner School of Environment and Society to identify a set of indicators to describe and quantify the social and economic impacts of forestry in Australia over time, which included a case study in north east Tasmania. This report was released in May 2009 and is available at:

http://www.daff.gov.au/forestry/national/monitoring_the_social_and_economic_impacts_of_forestry

This joint Australian and Tasmanian government response is available at:

<http://www.daff.gov.au/> and <http://www.dier.tas.gov.au/>