

**Independent Reviewer's Report to the Australian and Tasmanian Governments
on the third five-yearly review of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement**

13 November 2015

Letter of Submission

Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston
Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

The Hon. Paul Harriss
Minister for Resources
House of Assembly
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Ministers

Enclosed for your consideration is my *Review of the Implementation of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement for the Period 2007-2012*.

The Review has been conducted in accordance with the Terms of Reference agreed by your respective governments and considers the report *Implementation of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement 2007-2012* information contained in the *State of the Forests Report 2012* together with submissions received during the public consultation process. I trust this Review will contribute to the evolution of Regional Forest Agreement arrangements in Tasmania.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank officers from both of your Governments who provided invaluable assistance during this Review.

Yours sincerely



Dr Glen Kile AM FTSE
Independent Reviewer
13 November 2015

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Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AFS	Australian Forestry Standard
AS	Australian Standard
CAR	Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative
CRA	Comprehensive Regional Assessment
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DPIPWE	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (Tas.)
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EMS	Environmental Management System
ENGO	Environmental Non-Government Organisation
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth.)
ESFM	Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management
FCFP	Forest Conservation Fund Program
FCRF	Forest Conservation Revolving Fund
FFIC	Forests and Forest Industry Council of Tasmania
FPA	Forest Practices Authority
FPC	Forest Practices Code
FPP	Forest Practices Plan
FPPZL	Future Potential Production Zone Land
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FT	Forestry Tasmania
FWPA	Forest and Wood Products Australia
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GMP	General Management Plan
IFM	Intensive Forest Management
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JANIS	Joint ANZECC/MCFFA National Forest Policy Statement Implementation Sub-committee
LIST	Land Information System Tasmania
MIS	Managed Investment Scheme
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NFPS	National Forest Policy Statement
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
NWI	National Water Initiative
PEFC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
PFRP	Private Forest Reserves Program
PIRI	Pesticide Impact Rating Tool
PLCP	Private Land Conservation Program
PNFE	Permanent Native Forest Estate
PTR	Private Timber Reserve
PWS	Parks and Wildlife Service
RAA	Reserve Activity Assessment
R&D	Research and Development

RET	Renewable Energy Target
RFA	Regional Forest Agreement
SET	Forest, Wood, Paper, and Timber Products Industry Skills Enhancement and Training Project
SFEFL	Southern Forests Experimental Forest Landscape
SOFR	State of the Forests Report
STMU	Special Timber Management Unit
TCFA	Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (Supplementary Tasmanian RFA)
TERN	Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network
TFA	Tasmanian Forest Agreement
TFTI	Tasmanian Forest Tourism Initiative
TFIDP	Tasmanian Forest Industry Development Program
TRMCoP	Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice
TSIDP	Tasmanian Softwood Industry Development Program
TSP Act	Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 (Tas.)
TWWHA	Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area
WAFL	Water Availability and Forest Land Use Planning Tool
WIST	Water Information System of Tasmania
WHA	World Heritage Area
1080	Sodium fluoro acetate

Executive Summary

This review is based on the report *Implementation of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement 2007-2012* (Implementation Report) produced by the Parties, the State of the Forests Tasmania Report (SOFR 2012) prepared by the Forest Practices Authority and public comments received on these two documents. Public comments were sought from 17 April to 12 June 2015. Twenty-eight submissions were received from individuals and organisations. Of these submissions 25 were received for web publication in the representation period, and are subsequently available from the Tasmanian Department of State Growth (www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au).

This review assesses the performance of the Parties in implementing the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) for the period 2007-2012. Whilst this is essentially a compliance review, it has been undertaken with a focus on the outcomes of the RFA over the first 15 years and a view to the future in terms of improvements to strengthen the RFA framework in a renewed or extended RFA. From a compliance perspective, the focus was mainly on the Parties response to the 2007 Review and any identified areas of non-performance. The Implementation Report indicates over 90% of 231 specific actions, commitments or recommendations had been completed, implemented or superseded.

The legislative and regulatory environment was stable during the review period with no major changes affecting the implementation of the RFA. There was a review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) (Commonwealth of Australia 2009) that included a review of the compliance conditions of RFAs that would allow continued exemption from s.38 of the EPBC Act. The Australian Government's response to this review came towards the end of the review period.

During the review period the industry underwent a significant downturn and structural adjustment that approximately halved the size of the native forest industry and led to the cessation of most new plantation establishment.

Broad level performance is summarised by Sections of the review.

Land use (Section 3.1)

Commitments to the establishment of the CAR reserve system were largely met during the review period. Reservation (covenanting) of private forest was extended during the review to the extent program funds allowed. A small-scale market based mechanism (the Forest Conservation Revolving Fund) was established to reserve additional forests on private land. The RFA World Heritage Clauses were not utilised during the review period.

Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management (Section 3.2)

The commitments have largely been met for the forest practices system, threatened species and communities, forest research, integrated catchment management, environmental management systems and certification, fire and smoke management, wildlife management and reduced use of 1080, intensive forest management, old growth forest management, private land management and the PNFE policy with ongoing improvements for forest management in the State.

There have been important improvements to the decision support tools for the Forest Practices Code, development of models to predict water interception by plantations and to predict the potential for pesticide applications to contaminate surface waters and implementation of a smoke management system for regeneration and fuel reduction burns. Variable retention silviculture for old growth forests became operational and alternative methods developed for the control of browsing animals. Intensive forest management programs have been satisfactorily implemented creating an additional saw and veneer log resource from 2027 onwards.

Management planning for reserves remains incomplete. A new performance and monitoring system for reserve management has been developed. Assessment of the overall outcomes of the RFA for the conservation of biodiversity requires a greater commitment to appropriate research and assessment in both the CAR reserves and wood production forests although it is more advanced in the latter. Commitments relating to harvest residue utilisation were not invoked during the review period. Some progress was made in understanding the potential impact of climate change on forest ecosystems. The objective of the RFA to protect national estate values was followed through the review period although the balance of State and Commonwealth responsibilities had changed prior to the review period. A resource guide for managing cultural heritage in wood production forests was developed and implemented but there remains a need to encourage greater involvement of the Aboriginal community in forest management planning and forest stewardship.

Wood Resources (Section 3.3)

The commitment to independent review of sustainable sawlog yield was met during the review period. The commitment to provide a review of the sustainable sawlog yield to coincide with this review could not be met due to policy uncertainty. The total harvest was on average approximately 80% of the estimated sustained yield during the review period. Commitments to the supply of special species timbers became more difficult to meet over the review period. Attempts to manage the irregular supply of and demand for special species timbers have only been partially successful.

Industry Development (Section 3.4)

The RFA/TCFA commitments to industry development, infrastructure and marketing were generally met although it is difficult to assess the output and impact in several cases. These initiatives in totality were not enough to retain major sections of the industry in the face of shifting markets, the GFC, commercial business decisions, competitiveness issues and environmental campaigns. Industry adjustment assistance and investment in skills and training was valuable in contributing to the introduction of new technologies, improving efficiency across parts of the value chain and benefiting employment in the industry. However, due to the major downturn in the industry during the review period the overall benefits of the programs were diminished with the loss from the industry of a number of grant recipient businesses and major job losses across the industry.

Significant progress was made in overcoming technical issues in relation to processing plantation timber, particularly *Eucalyptus nitens*, although the profitability of processing plantation logs for higher value uses remains problematic.

Other Forest Uses (Section 3.5)

Commitments made in relation to tourism and recreation were completed, commitments to apiculture have been met as far as stakeholder agreement allows, and there has been ongoing implementation of the mineral exploration and mining clauses of the RFA.

Data, Reporting and Legislation (Section 3.6)

The commitments in relation to data use and availability and financial assistance have been met. Three of the major programs supported the RFA/TCFA (private forest conservation, intensive forest management and industry development and restructuring) were independently evaluated. Collection and reporting of socio economic data was undertaken during the review period through the CRC for Forestry but that mechanism is no longer available with the closure of the CRC for Forestry. The SOFR, published in October 2012 was a significant compilation of available information on all aspects of the forests and all forest based industries in Tasmania. New Aboriginal Heritage Protection legislation whilst introduced to Parliament as per the RFA commitment has not yet been enacted.

Ongoing RFA commitments

From a total of 231 commitments there are 103 RFA/TCFA commitments that are either ongoing, yet to be complete or not yet required or utilised commitments. Nearly half of the ongoing commitments apply to reserves and reserve management and threatened species and communities. Whilst they have not been analysed in detail for the period post 2012 there are undoubtedly opportunities for consolidation and to modernise in line with changes in legislation, policy, industry circumstance and more modern approaches.

Overall assessment of RFA outcomes

In terms of compliance with the terms of the RFA /TCFA, the Parties have met the great majority of the commitments, actions and recommendations of the RFA/TCFA and the 2002 and 2007 Reviews. In terms of overall outcomes an assessment against the objectives of the RFA indicates a mixed scorecard in terms of higher-level outcomes with differing perspectives on the balance achieved between social, economic and environmental objectives.

A renewed /extended RFA

The renewal / extension of the RFA was a concern for stakeholders. Key themes included the process for renewal /extension, the opportunity for stakeholder input, the nature of the agreement, the continuation or otherwise of the approval under s.38 of the EPBC Act and new information gathering to inform the RFA renewal/ extension.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background to the Review

The State of Tasmania and the Commonwealth of Australia entered into an RFA on 8 November 1997. This 20-year agreement established the framework for ecologically sustainable forest management (ESFM) in the State of Tasmania.

An important element of the RFA is the requirement to review the performance of the agreement. A review is an assessment of progress made against the milestones and commitments specified in the RFA.

Clause 45 of the Tasmanian RFA requires that:

A review of the performance of this Agreement is to be undertaken during the last year of each five-year period to assess the progress of the Agreement against its specified milestones and commitments:

The review is to be conducted:

- (i) By a person or body jointly appointed by the Parties
- (ii) In accordance with agreed priorities, procedures and funding arrangements.

The review will:

- (iii) Invite and take account of public comments
- (iv) Use and take account of the Sustainability Indicators including trends
- (v) Be sufficient to satisfy the requirements for a *State of the Forests Tasmania Report 2012* (SOFR 2012) as required by Section 59D of the *Forestry Act 1920* (Tas.) *
- (vi) Be completed within four months of its commencement
- (vii) Develop a report detailing the review process and its findings.

The Parties may extend the review period to ensure a rigorous process.

The RFA is in three parts:

- Part 1 - Interpretation, Definition and General Provisions
- Part 2 - (non legally binding) –including but not restricted to Functioning of the Agreement, Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management, Threatened Flora and Fauna, CAR Reserve System, Industry Development, Indigenous Heritage, Intensive Forest Management, Other Forest Uses, Competition Principles, Research and Data Use and Access
- Part 3 - (legally enforceable rights and obligations) - Forest Management, Compensation, Databases and Information, Sustainable Sawlog Yield, Pricing and Allocation, Financial Assistance and Termination.

**This clause is now redundant. The State of the Forests Report (SOFR) is now prepared in accordance with Section 4Z of the *Forest Practices Act 1985* (Tas). The SOFR is prepared independently by the Forest Practices Authority and is reported to the Parliament of Tasmania. SOFR is now an input to the review, not an output from it.

Five-yearly reviews were completed in 2002 (Resource Planning and Development Commission 2002) and 2007 (Ramsay 2008). This review covers the period July 2007 to June 2012.

As provided under Clause 8 of the RFA, it is the intent of the Parties to agree to an extension process for the agreement as part of the third five-yearly review.

An *Implementation of the Tasmanian RFA 2007-2012 Report* (Implementation Report) was jointly prepared by the State of Tasmania and the Commonwealth of Australia and released for public comment from 17 April 2015 to 12 June 2015. To support the public comments period a Summary Document was also published by the Parties.

While the Parties were responsible for the Implementation Report, an Independent Reviewer (the Reviewer) was appointed by the Parties to undertake a third-party review of the Implementation Report, the public submissions and supporting documentation for the RFA.

The Tasmanian RFA has been subject to a number of amendments, variations and additions through subsequent agreements between the Parties:

- Variation to the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement 19 July 2001
- Supplementary Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement 13 May 2005 (incorporating commitments from the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (2005) and referred to here as the TCFA)
- Variation to the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement 23 February 2007

These changes together with recommendations from the 2002 and 2007 Reviews encompass 231 recommendations, milestones, commitments or actions by the Parties listed in the Implementation Report.

1.2 Terms of Reference for the Independent Reviewer

The role of the Independent Reviewer will be to review the Implementation Report and associated written submissions, and report to the Joint Working Group of the Parties overseeing the review. The review will cover the 2007 to 2012 period, using data reported in SOFR 2012.

The Independent Reviewer is required to:

1. Receive written submissions from the public on the *Implementation of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement 2007-2012* report with respect to the milestones and commitments of the RFA and, recognising the commitment to extend the Tasmanian RFA, receive public comments relevant to, and within the scope of, the proposed framework for the extension of the agreement.
2. Review written public submissions and undertake further targeted consultation with organisations or individuals as required, to clarify any issues raised in the written submissions.
3. Provide a written report to the Commonwealth and Tasmanian Ministers responsible for forestry, which:

- Provides comment on the report on *Implementation of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement 2007-2012*, and any specific recommendations on implementation, considering the written public submissions received.
 - Describes the key issues identified in the written public submissions.
 - Noting the policy framework as established by the National Forest Policy Statement, identifies any additional issues that could be considered for the continued implementation of the RFA in the context of the proposed extension of the agreement, including minor improvements that strengthen the RFA framework.
 - Lists the names of the individuals and organisations who made written public submissions.
4. Deliver all written submissions and information used by the Independent Reviewer to the Joint Working Group with the report.

Timing

The Independent Reviewer must submit their report to the Commonwealth and Tasmanian Ministers responsible for Forestry within four months of the closure of the public comment period.

General

The terms of reference should be read in conjunction with the Scoping Agreement.

The Scoping Agreement for the review signed on 2 April 2015 by the State of Tasmania and the Commonwealth of Australia is at Attachment 1.

It was outside the scope of this review to assess progress with implementation of the RFA commitments and milestones in the period 2012-2017. As a consequence there may be work that has been undertaken, progressed or completed, or changes in the legal and policy framework that have changed the nature of or need for some of the RFA ongoing commitments. However, for relevance some of the key policy changes since 2012 have been referenced (by year of effect or announcement) and, where appropriate, recommendations recognize changes or policy reviews in train.

1.3 Review Process

In accordance with the Scoping Agreement, the State of Tasmania and the Commonwealth of Australia jointly prepared an Implementation Report. As noted above, the report was released on 17 April 2015 for an eight-week public comment period. The Tasmanian Department of State Growth received public submissions.

The report and opportunity for submissions was:

- Notified to key stakeholders throughout the Tasmanian RFA region;
- Advertised through the following media:
 - Australian on Saturday 18 April 2015
 - Burnie Advocate on Saturday 18 April 2015
 - Facebook, commencing on Monday 20 April 2015

- Hobart Mercury on Saturday 18 April 2015
- Koori Mail on Wednesday 22 April 2015
- Launceston Examiner on Saturday 18 April 2015
- Tasmanian Country on Friday 24 April 2015
- Published on the Tasmanian Department of State Growth website.

Consistent with the Scoping Agreement the Joint Working Group (JWG) oversaw the independent review. The JWG consists of two representatives of the Australian Government and two from the Tasmanian Government, as follows:

Assistant Secretary – Forestry Branch – Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

Assistant Secretary – Landcare and Biodiversity Policy - Australian Government Department of the Environment

Director --Resource Policy – Tasmanian Government Department of State Growth

General Manager – Natural and Cultural Heritage – Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

This report was informed by consultation with the Joint Working Group, agencies with implementation responsibilities, supplementary information provided by the Parties on some matters of detail in the Implementation Report and clarification of some matters with submitters.

1.4 Submissions to the Review

Twenty-eight submissions were received for this independent review. A list of the submissions received and a summary of the key issues/comments raised in submissions is at Table 3 by submission and Table 4 by broad RFA category.

The submissions varied greatly in depth and coverage of issues but key matters included the following:

- Timeliness of this review, the balance and overall outcomes of the RFA and the RFA renewal or extension in terms of both process and objectives
- Calls for additional forest reservation (public and private), changes to the Forest Practices Code (FPC) and stronger protection of threatened species and communities
- Resource security, special species timbers and plantations, sustained yield and potential climate change impacts
- Forest policy and land use issues.

As noted above a number of submissions made comment on the timing and scope of this review. Most acknowledged the reasons for the delay but a number indicated this review should not ignore policy developments commenced during or subsequent to the review period.

Submissions are listed in Table 3, issues/comments raised in the submissions are summarized in Table 4 by submitter and Table 5 by major category.

1.5 Structure of the Review Report

The review report follows the structure of the 2007 Review report:

- That review provided comprehensive background information in relation to RFA milestone/commitments (and in some cases their evolution) that is not repeated here but can be readily referenced in that report under the same headings
- That review made a large number of recommendations and it was convenient to review implementation progress under the same headings although with some minor consolidation to reduce repetition.

A number of submitters were more interested in 'what comes next' than the detail of compliance with the current RFA. Whilst this is essentially a compliance review it has been undertaken with a focus as much as possible on the outcomes of the RFA over the first 15 years and a view to the future in terms of improvements to strengthen the framework in a renewed or extended RFA. Policy issues raised in the submissions outside the scope of the compliance review that could be considered by the Parties are included in Tables 4 and 5.

Chapter 2 – Recommendations

Recommendations deal with a number of residual implementation matters for the current RFA and matters that should be considered in a renewed/extended RFA.

Reserves

1: The Parties review outstanding commitments in relation to reserve establishment and determine those that should be included in a renewed/extended RFA.

Forest Practices System

2: The State considers continuing improvements to transparency in the development of Forest Practice Plans and the accessibility to non-private information for these plans.

Management Planning

3: The State reassess the process and timeframe for completing the management plans for Rocky Cape, Mount William and Savage River National Parks with a view to their completion as soon as possible.

4: The Parties seek opportunities to encourage greater involvement of the Aboriginal community in management planning and forest stewardship during the RFA renewal/ extension process.

Reserve Management

5: The State builds on its existing monitoring framework to develop a long-term forest condition monitoring system across all forest tenures to assess changes in ecosystem health and vitality.

Threatened Species and Communities

6: The Parties continue to improve the mechanisms in place to research, evaluate and communicate outcomes for the protection of threatened species and biodiversity across all forest tenures.

Research

7: The Parties consider the development of a resourced and prioritised Research and Development Plan as part of the RFA renewal /extension.

Utilisation of Harvest Residues

8: The Parties ensure any future prescriptions for harvesting non-merchantable biomass from native forest coupes are developed and monitored using the available scientific knowledge.

Permanent Native Forest Estate Policy

9: The State considers matters raised in submissions to this review, in relation to the PNFE, as part of the 2015 State PNFE review and the outcomes be incorporated in any revised PNFE and recognised in a renewed /extended RFA.

National Estate/ Heritage Protection

10: The Parties follow-up on their response to the 2007 Review to ensure that compatibility of the RFA with Commonwealth heritage protection legislation is considered as part of the RFA renewal/ extension process.

Sustainable Yield

11: The Parties continue to include regular reviews of the sustainable sawlog yield as an element of a renewed/extended RFA.

Special Species Timbers

12: The State ensures matters raised in submissions to this review in relation to the management, supply and marketing of special species timbers be considered through the development of the new State special species timber management plan and the outcomes recognised in a renewed/extended RFA.

Financial Assistance

13: If the Commonwealth should implement any significant future RFA funding program it should establish clear performance and evaluation measures.

Monitoring and Reporting

14: The Parties support an updated socio economic analysis as part of the RFA renewal/ extension process and periodic collection of socio economic data during the term of a renewed/extended RFA.

Legislation

15: The State considers improved mechanisms for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage as part of the RFA renewal/extension.

RFA Renewal/Extension

16: The Parties consider the simplification of a renewed/extended RFA by dealing with fewer areas at a higher strategic level and with a greater emphasis on measuring and reporting outcomes.

Chapter 3 – Findings of the Review

3.1 Land Use

3.1.1 Public Reserves

Issues

A number of submissions called for more forest reservation including at the largest scale the inclusion of the Future Potential Production Zone Land (FPPZL) into the formal reserve system, higher reservation levels for threatened communities and the conversion of all informal reserves to formal reserves. Other comments were that the level of reservation meets or exceeds international benchmarks and increasing reservation reduces the opportunity to balance economic, environmental and social outcomes.

There was also comment on the criteria for reservation noting that the definition of high conservation value forest is contestable and that reservation claims representing particular forest areas as pristine may be incorrect.

Analysis

The establishment of a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) reserve system was a key element of the RFA that was extended further through the TCFA. The implementation of the commitments of both agreements was largely achieved through the first and second review periods and the achievements against the objectives reported on in detail in the 2002 and 2007 Reviews. Implementation action during this third review period has essentially been at a finer scale including boundary adjustments for conservation or operational reasons, improved identification and mapping of some communities compared with the original RFA vegetation mapping and some changes in category from informal to formal reserves.

The reservation levels of forest communities and old growth in formal and informal reserves on public land are shown in Table 13 and 14 of the Implementation Report. The extent of changes to informal reserves on public land is shown in Table 7 of the report in accordance with Clause 17 of the TCFA. The full CAR reserve system is publicly available as an annually updated spatial layer on the Land Information System Tasmania (LIST- www.thelist.tas.gov.au).

Two matters are noted. Firstly the area of old growth reserved on public land fell short of the target at the end of the review period. Subsequent to the review period further reservation has increased the area of reserved old growth forest on public land to 1 027 400 ha (plus 16 900 ha on private land) which exceeds the target. Unreserved old growth on public and private land is 169 200 ha (Information supplied by Forestry Tasmania). Secondly, the covenanting to formal reserve status of a small area of old growth on Hydro land had not been completed at the end of the review period.

Although the RFA has met its scientifically based CAR reserve targets (and exceeded by reservation subsequent to this review period) a number of submissions called for more reservation of public and private forest. Additional forest reservation is outside the scope of this review. Some submissions noted calls for more reservation are not accompanied by any scientific assessments of the benefits to conservation or the costs and benefits to other stakeholders. The role of conservation science in reservation claims has been documented in Grove (2013). Tasmania compares favourably in terms of international benchmarks such as those agreed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and other evidence based studies that suggest 25-75% of a region must be managed for conservation of nature as a primary purpose and a benchmark of 50% is seen as desirable (Noss *et al.* 2012).

Sustainability Indicator 1.1c (SOFR 2012) provides details on reservation status of forest types on public and private land and by IUCN category of reserve.

Table 2(b) indicates there are four commitments not yet finalised in relation to CAR reserve system establishment. The RFA renewal/extension process will provide an opportunity for these commitments to be reviewed.

Recommendation 1: The Parties review outstanding commitments in relation to reserve establishment and determine those that should be included in a renewed/extended RFA.

3.1.2 Private Reserves

Issues

One submission noted that a number of threatened communities and critical habitat of threatened species occurs in private forests and that the Commonwealth should finance a new private forest conservation program as a matter of priority and such a program be combined with stronger land clearing restrictions.

Analysis

The RFA established a private forest reserves program to complement conservation values on public land (Clause 59, Attachment 8). An additional program, the Forest Conservation Fund Program (FCFP), was established under the TCFA to extend private forest reserves targeting old growth and under reserved forest communities.

The original RFA Private Forest Reserves Program (PFRP) had reserved (covenanted) 38 400 ha of private land when it concluded. The State of Tasmania via the Private Land Conservation Program provided additional support for stewardship and monitoring of areas covenanted through the PFRP (Clause 29 TCFA).

The FCFP was completed during this review period (December 2010) and had a target to protect and manage up to 45 600 ha of forested private land (Clause 21 TCFA). The FCFP operated through a joint steering committee and a competitive

tendering process for landowners seeking to covenant their forest. The final total area covenanted was 28 023 ha of under reserved forest types of which 11 039 ha were classified as old growth. Total funding for covenants and land purchases under the program was \$43 million.

Four hundred and thirty four covenants were established in Tasmania through the PRFP and FCFP. These covenants continue to be administered by the Private Land Conservation Program of the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) that provides on-ground and administrative support to covenant landowners.

The management of Tasmanian Conservation Covenants on Private Land is thus a matter for the Tasmanian Government under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* with the exception of variations to covenants. Some covenants contain a clause requiring Commonwealth consent to be included when proposing to vary covenants established with Commonwealth funding.

A small scale Forest Conservation Revolving Fund (FCRF) was established in 2007 and will operate until 2013-14 (recently extended to 2019). The Commonwealth entered into an agreement supported with funding of \$6.28 million with the Tasmanian Land Conservancy for this purpose. Under this market mechanism purchased private forest land is placed under conservation covenant in perpetuity and resold on the open market. By 31 December 2012 an additional 2 603 ha of forest had been conserved through the FCRF.

The total covenanted is approximately 11% of the private forest estate although there are other not for profit conservation bodies such as the Tasmanian Land Conservancy that hold additional reserved areas.

One submission noted the often-significant biodiversity value of remnant forest on private land and suggested the Commonwealth fund a new private forest conservation program. The submission suggested this initiative be aligned with further restrictions on vegetation clearing but that issue is dealt with under the Permanent Native Forest Estate Policy (PNFE -Section 3.2.15). The Parties should consider the need for further private forest reservation initiatives as part of the RFA renewal/extension process.

3.1.3 World Heritage

Issues

A number of concerns were expressed in relation to extension of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) subsequent to the review period with the request that any future World Heritage Area (WHA) extensions should follow the processes set out in the RFA clauses.

Analysis

Conditions for nomination of additional forests for World Heritage Status are detailed in RFA clauses 39- 42. Clauses 40-42 were not utilised during the third review period (Table 2d).

The only modification to the TWWHA during the review period was a boundary modification finalised in 2010 incorporating 21 adjacent national parks and State reserves. This added 20 096 ha to the TWWHA and increased the representation of tall eucalypt forests and cultural sites of significance to the Aboriginal community within the TWWHA.

During the review period Australia submitted four reports to the World Heritage Committee (WHC) on the management of the TWWHA and the WHC made six decisions in relation to the TWWHA.

Clause 39 of the RFA committed the parties to jointly participate in the further World Heritage Assessment of relevant Australia wide themes. The eucalypt theme was one such theme recognised but this is not relevant to the Tasmanian RFA.

A number of submissions expressed concern at the lack of utilisation or operation of the WHA clauses in a WHA extension after the review period but these concerns are outside the scope of this review.

Section 3.1 Summary

Commitments to the establishment of the CAR reserve system were largely met during the review period. Reservation (covenanting) of private forest was extended during the review to the extent program funds allowed. A small-scale market based mechanism (the Forest Conservation Revolving Fund) was established to reserve additional forests on private land. The RFA World Heritage Clauses were not utilised during the review period.

3.2 Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management

3.2.1 Forest Practices System

Issues

Several submissions made comment on the forest practices system. Apart from one call for abolition or reform of the Forest Practices Authority (FPA), concern in relation to forest practices *per se* (such as clear felling) and inadequate protection of environmental values, the key themes expressed in submissions relevant to this review were around the issues of planning, oversight and accountability and information availability. Issues raised included:

Planning

- Application of outputs of management planning tools supporting the Forest Practices Code (FPC) should be made mandatory
- Reform arrangements to prevent clearing of threatened communities and/or critical habitat for threatened species on private land where compensation is refused
- There should be full implementation of landscape scale planning
- Duty of care provisions should be removed and compensation made available to private landholders
- Inadequate consideration of potential impacts on adjoining properties when approving Forest Practices Plans (FPPs).

Oversight and accountability

- Lack of independent review and oversight of FPPs and vegetation clearance decisions approved by the FPA
- Instigate third party appeal rights for FPPs.

Information availability

- There should be increased and easier accessibility to FPPs and associated information.

One submission claimed the forest practices system exceeded the requirements of international forest certification schemes and another commended the changes made to the system over the review period but claimed that the Tasmanian forest practice system does not meet the requirements of the EPBC Act. One submission suggested the revised FPA resource guide for managing cultural heritage in wood production forests should be incorporated or recognised in a renewed or extended RFA.

Analysis

The Forest Practices System is a key element in meeting the ESFM objective of the RFA and was a major focus of the 2002 and 2007 Reviews. The Implementation Report indicates that the relevant RFA commitments, and recommendations from the 2002 Review have been met and the focus here is on the responses to the 2007 Review recommendations (Recommendations 1-4) relevant to the period 2007-2012. The key elements of those recommendations are the independence and integrity of monitoring and compliance functions, availability of information and interaction with neighbours.

A general review of the FPC (2000) commenced in 2007 but was formally suspended in 2010 due to policy uncertainty (an amended Code was issued in 2015). During the review period the FPA undertook significant development of procedures and planning tools used in the FPC including:

- Revised the monitoring and assessment protocols, to assess the implementation and effectiveness of FPPs (2010)
- Revised the investigation and enforcement protocols for dealing with alleged breaches of the *Forest Practices Act 1985* (2011)

- In response to the State Right to Information Act (2009) reviewed their policy on the availability of information on FPPs and established protocols for access to FPPs
- Clarified the roles and responsibilities of participants within the forest practices system with industry but also an initiative relevant to the interested public (2011)
- Published a resource guide for managing cultural heritage in wood production forests (2012)
- Reviewed the biodiversity provisions of the FPC (2009) and their implementation (Ongoing)
- With DPIPW Threatened Species Unit revised the Threatened Fauna Advisor decision-making tool (disc based version 2001-2014 and web based from 2014). The Threatened Fauna Advisor is updated as new information becomes available.

The response to the 2007 Review Recommendation 1 is covered in dot points one and two above. The reports on monitoring and assessment of FPPs and enforcement actions are summarised FPA Annual Reports. Recommendation 2 concerned the availability of information on FPPs and is covered by dot point three above noting that Forestry Tasmania currently makes information available on its FPPs on its own website. Recommendations 3 and 4 dealt with the industry developed Good Neighbour Charter. This matter is dealt with in Section 3.2.7.

As for the 2002 and 2007 Reviews, the FPA/FPC attracted numerous comments. At the highest level, one submission called for the abolition or reform of the FPA a matter of State policy beyond the scope of this review. A number of submissions also questioned the integrity and rigour of the FPC. Analysis of such claims is also beyond the scope of this review but it is noted that:

- The FPA continuously adopts its advice and processes through working with DPIPW and external specialists as new information on natural and cultural values comes forward as part of an adaptive management approach within its legislative framework
- Tasmanian forest practices system has been subject to a number of independent assessments that rank it as one of the most prescriptive globally and also one of the most effective (Mc Dermott *et al.* 2010 (Chapters 8 and 10), Nambiar *et al.* 2012). The Biodiversity Review Panel (2009) undertook a significant and comprehensive review of the biodiversity provisions of the Tasmanian Forest Practices Code, and concluded: *“The panel’s review has found that the Tasmanian forest practices system provides the basis for an effective framework for ensuring that forest practices are consistent with the delivery of sustainable management from the perspective of biodiversity conservation. It is a regulatory system, not a forest management system, but it takes an adaptive management approach to complement other components of the State’s biodiversity conservation strategy.”*

At the planning level, the main matters raised in submissions were that the output of planning or decision support tools should be made mandatory and the duty of care provisions should be removed. Planning or decision support tools are just that and

on the ground planning must take into consideration a range of factors that might give better outcomes through a flexible approach than might be achieved through a fully mandated approach. For example, the same outcome might be achieved on a broader landscape basis with a less prescriptive coupe-by-coupe basis. Mandating is related to the duty of care that has been part of the FPC for many years for private land and has now been explicitly recognised for public forests. This requires exclusion of forest practices from areas containing other significant environmental and social values at a level of up to an additional 5% of the existing and proposed forest on the property for areas totally excluded from operations or at a level of up to an additional 10% where partial harvesting of the reserve area is compatible with the protection of the values. The conservation of values beyond the duty of care in the *Forest Practices Code* is deemed to be for the community benefit and beyond what can reasonably be required of landowners and should be achieved on a voluntary basis through relevant governmental and market-based programs and incentives (Forest Practices Authority 2015).

The FPA has undertaken a preliminary assessment on retention levels on a sample of coupes on private land that showed a median retention level of around 14% (FPA 2013). Retention levels for harvested coupes on State forest could be calculated from Forestry Tasmania (FT) FPPs. As noted the FPC is already highly prescriptive but is also designed to be practical and cost effective so the cost benefit of further prescription to protect natural values would need to be demonstrated. The matter of clearing in the absence of compensation is dealt with in Section (3.2.15).

Independent review of FPPs could be seen as simply adding bureaucratic process given the interactive nature of FPP preparation and where necessary the input of relevant experts. It has also been proposed that draft FPPs would be publicly advertised and any submissions taken into account in preparing the final plan. The feasibility of such a step in the preparation of FPPs should be investigated.

Action has been taken on the accessibility of FPPs as a result of the 2007 Review. However, the degree of convenience of access (rightly there is a need to seek details from the applicant in the first instance) and comprehensiveness of the available information (it does not necessarily include special values reports or risk assessment information although they can be made available) remains of concern. It would be beneficial if all non-private information on FPPs could be located in the one accessible format.

The proposal for third party appeals for FPPs is a more significant step given the existing policy, legal and operational framework for forestry operations on public and private land and hence is a matter of State policy beyond the scope of this review.

Negotiations in relation to boundary decisions with neighbours would seem an operational issue for the proponents of FPPs although the FPC provides minimum standards and guidelines.

A number of references were made in submissions to landscape level planning, an approach being developed by FPA where possible to maximise biodiversity conservation. Another submission called for legislation to protect aesthetic and cultural landscapes, a matter outside the scope of this review.

There are thirteen ongoing/ not fully completed commitments and one unutilised commitment related to forest practices (Table 2 j).

Recommendation 2: The State considers continuing improvements to transparency in the development of Forest Practice Plans and the accessibility to non-private information for these plans.

3.2.2 Management Planning

Issues

Matters raised in submissions were:

- Reserve management plans had not been completed
- The Aboriginal community seeks more formal engagement in preparation of management plans for parks and reserves and greater participation in forest management.

Analysis

Management plans for forests on all tenures are important elements of the RFA objective of ESFM. They provide the mechanism for consultation, agreement of management objectives and for assessing the performance against management objectives.

The 2007 Review reported that commitments (RFA – Attachment 10.8, 10.13) had not been met for the reserve estate and in some instances '*there is still considerable work to meet the commitments that are many years beyond agreed milestones*' (2007 Review page 43).

The 2007 Review made four recommendations on reserve management. In summary only limited progress has been made in addressing these recommendations and meeting the RFA commitments. Management plans for Rocky Cape and Mount William National Parks remain deferred due to Tasmanian Aboriginal community interest in these areas and whilst a draft management plan for Savage River National Park was extant at the time of the 2007 Review it was not finalised during the review period. Further deadlines agreed in response to the 2007 Review recommendations for completing management plans were not met during the review period.

It is planned that approximately 324 other typically smaller reserves (now many more post review period) in various categories reserved under the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002* be managed under a General Management Plan (GMP). The first draft of a plan covering reserves in each of the three Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service operational regions was completed during the review period. The GMP has a generic component and a component specific to each reserve and is considered a valuable approach to dealing with the expanding number of disparate reserves. The GMP is subject to ongoing improvement.

Commitments 12 and 13 of the TCFA in relation to amending Forest Management Plans to include additional reserves and inclusion of 500 ha of Commonwealth land in the CAR reserve system as informal reserves were completed during the review period.

The delay in completing reserve management plans remains a concern. According to one submission the Aboriginal community seeks more formal engagement in preparation of management plans for parks and reserves (and forest stewardship generally) but it is unclear whether existing mechanisms are adequate for this engagement or will allow timely completion of the outstanding plans.

Greater involvement of the Aboriginal community in management planning and forest stewardship should be considered in the RFA renewal or extension process noting there are already opportunities in the management planning arena that have not yet been completed. Sustainability indicator 6.4c (SOFR 2012) sets out Aboriginal community involvement in forest management during the review period.

3: The State reassess the process and timeframe for completing the management plans for Rocky Cape, Mount William and Savage River National Parks with a view to their completion as soon as possible.

4: The Parties seek opportunities to encourage greater involvement of the Aboriginal community in management planning and forest stewardship during the RFA renewal/ extension process.

3.2.3 Reserve Management

Issues

Matters raised in submissions were:

- All secure reserves should be separate tenure, mapped at appropriate scale and signposted appropriately
- Mining, shooting and logging should be prohibited in reserves
- Forest operations near conservation covenanted private forests might compromise conservation values and there was a need for larger setbacks
- Concern as to whether there is adequate resourcing for the reserve management system.

Analysis

For this review period the Parties reported that the ongoing obligations of RFA Clauses 24(a), 51 and TCFA 37 were met. The Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and Forestry Tasmania undertook project auditing under the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA - environmental impact assessment) of the Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice (TRMCoP - 2003) relating to infrastructure, planned burning, events, weed and pest management, commercial tourism and Aboriginal heritage protection. An RAA Annual Report (RFA Clause 94, Attachment 10.9) for 2012-2013 was published subsequent to the review period. It is the first such report

to be published. This was a summary of the audit activity rather than the results of individual audits. Audit information is currently used for internal performance improvement. A further step in improving transparency around reserve management would be the publication of the results of individual audits particularly the more significant ones.

There are two main issues in relation to reserve management (a) are the reserves being managed to sustain the values for which they were created? and (b) are there sufficient resources available to properly manage existing reserves?

The 2007 Review summarised (p 46-47) the position in relation to question (a): *The information and data to answer this question is not readily available. The Sustainability Indicators Report provides data on how much forest is protected but not the condition of those forests and whether there are changes occurring due to changed management regimes. The commitments made in RFA Attachment 10.8 to ensuring that management plans for formal reserves include objectives and that they be periodically reviewed to assess performance against each objective, and in RFA Attachment 10.13 - that management plans for reserves clearly identify their CAR values and the actions being taken in each reserve to appropriately manage those values - are important measures to assist in answering the above question. There is a need for continuous improvement in the ability to measure and report on these matters.*

A step to addressing the first question has been the development of a Performance Monitoring and Reporting System for Tasmania's National Parks and Reserves by the PWS. This system was under active development during the review period although the final project report was published in 2013. The system is now being implemented. *This monitoring and reporting system allows a more outcome and adaptive management approach. The system should allow the development of status and trend reports, periodic evaluation reports and case studies.

The CAR reserve system was established to protect a number of categories of values. CAR reserves are to be managed in a regional context consistent with the management objectives for each category of the reserve (RFA Clause 51 and Attachment 7). The management objectives are more or less extensive depending on the category of reserve but a primary purpose in all cases is the conservation of biodiversity. In terms of the RFA, however, after 15 years there is little reporting on the performance of the reserve system in meeting one of its primary purposes and the linkage between reserve management and management in adjoining wood production and private forests in protecting biodiversity. It is not clear how far the reserve monitoring and reporting system will go towards addressing these matters, as raised in the 2007 Review.

Two key areas include (1) condition of forest in reserves and the management of threats, risks and impacts and (2) the monitoring of the effectiveness of the reserve system in protecting biodiversity. In relation to (1) the very significant areas of forests in reserves coupled with threats from abiotic events (drought, high temperatures, longer term climate change) and biotic pests (pest outbreaks, weeds, feral animals

* (<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=5756>)

new pest incursions), indicate the need to develop a better system for monitoring forest condition, or ecological health across reserves and other forest tenures on an ongoing basis. Such a system would provide a baseline for assessment of the impacts of climate change on forest ecosystems as well as identifying shorter-term changes and threats and opportunities for adaptive management. Elements of such a system already exist such as inventory plots and the long-term myrtle wilt monitoring plots established by Forestry Tasmania. The Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN) provides a continental scale framework within which such a regional initiative can be developed. The Victorian Forest Monitoring Program (www.delwp.vic.gov.au) is an example of a system that has been developed at a State level. Development of a forest condition monitoring system would enable more meaningful reporting against Criteria 3 –Maintenance of ecosystem health and vitality - in the SOFR.

The issue of effectiveness of the monitoring of biodiversity outcomes is discussed further in Section 3.2.4 below.

In relation to question (b) Recommendation 9 of the 2007 Review (at a minimum maintaining funding for reserve management in real terms) is reported as not progressed by the Parties over the review period. The diversification of and increasing income from park entry fees and other enterprises in reserves to support reserve management, project funding and one off budget initiatives is, however, to be welcomed. As indicated in the 2007 Review the capacity of government budgets to support the effective and accountable management of increasing areas of reserves will be an ongoing challenge.

Table 2(b) indicates approximately thirteen ongoing commitments or commitments and actions yet to be finalised in relation to reserve management.

Recommendation 5: The State builds on its existing monitoring framework to develop a long-term forest condition monitoring system across all forest tenures to assess changes in ecosystem health and vitality.

3.2.4 Threatened Species and Communities

Issues

A number of matters were raised on this topic. They are summarised as:

Legislation and regulation

- ESFM and protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) is best achieved by removal of the 'RFA exemption' under the EPBC Act.
- Tasmanian policies and legislation governing forestry activities do not achieve equivalent standards of protection to those under the EPBC Act and should be revised
- Clearing of threatened vegetation communities may occur as a consequence of a potential regulatory gap in the *Forest Practices Act 1985*.

Monitoring

- Threatened species prescriptions lack targets and are not adequately monitored to determine if the prescriptions meet their objectives.

Resources and research adoption

- Funding to the DPIPW Threatened Species Unit should be increased for monitoring and research.
- New research results are not being translated into management practices to protect biodiversity and protected species.

Analysis

The 2007 Review provides extensive discussion of the implementation of the RFA Clauses relating to the process and priorities for the preparation of State and National Recovery Plans and Threat Abatement Plans (Clauses 32-37) and Clauses 68-71, 96 and 97 relating to the management of RFA priority species (mainly threatened species). The text of the latter Clauses was amended in February 2007 to clarify their intent following the Wielangta Case. There were no amendments to the RFA or legislation that affected the management of threatened species and communities during this review period.

The Parties agreed in 2010 to abandon the RFA priority species listing as it is now superseded by the State (under the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (TSP Act)) and Commonwealth (under the EPBC Act) threatened species listing processes. These are considered to be more up-to-date and sophisticated compared with the process available in 1997. The Parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding – Species Information Partnership in relation to the alignment of threatened species lists that operated for three years from April 2010. There are currently 681 species listed under the TSP Act and 211 under the EPBC Act.

The 2002 Review made a number of recommendations relating to threatened species and communities that were either completed by the time of the 2007 Review (2), ongoing as part of threatened species and community management (1), superseded by the 2007 Review (1) or the Parties agreed not to implement (1). The 2007 Review made seven recommendations relating to threatened species and communities.

The Parties report that all the ongoing RFA commitments were met during the review period. Ten single species recovery plans relevant to forests were prepared cooperatively with the Commonwealth for threatened species listed under the TSP Act and the Commonwealth EPBC Act. Five multiple species recovery plans relevant to forests were prepared. The Commonwealth adopted nine recovery plans for species endemic to Tasmania during the review period. The State also contributed to six multijurisdictional National Species Recovery Plans including the third revision of the Swift Parrot Recovery Plan (2012). *Eucalyptus ovata* - *Callitris oblonga* forest community is the only Tasmanian forest type currently listed under the EPBC Act. The State prepared a recovery plan that was adopted by the Commonwealth.

Work on protection of threatened species has continued during the review period including prioritisation of species or groups of species for recovery plans and review

of management prescriptions/ forest practices to protect threatened species. This work is ongoing as new knowledge becomes available. Agreed management plans for fauna are based on the FPA's Threatened Fauna Advisor system that was revised including stakeholder consultation during the review period. Threatened flora management is based on the FPA's Forest Botany Manuals and individual prescriptions determined on a case-by-case basis. A Threatened Flora Advisor is in preparation. The minor changes in conservation status of the 74 RFA priority species over the review period are shown in Indicator 1.2b (SOFR 2012).

The Scientific Advisory Committee constituted under the TSP Act undertakes ongoing review of species listed under the Act (currently 681). The Threatened Species Committee examines and endorses prescriptions in the FPAs Threatened Species Advisor that contains specific prescriptions for key species.

Recommendations 12-14 from the 2007 Review largely concerned expansion or greater effort in relation to existing processes and availability of information on listing of species and have been addressed as resources have allowed. At the end of the review period, 373 listed species did not have published or draft listing statements. The development of a national common assessment methodology for listing threatened species and consequential changes to the TSP Act, and a review of Tasmania's threatened species lists, should provide the opportunity to identify future priorities for work in this area.

Recommendation 15 has been addressed by preparation of revised list of priority species prepared in 2011. Recommendation 16 concerned the review of processes for determining management prescriptions and the independent monitoring of their application. There was a dual response to this recommendation that saw:

- A joint review and revision in 2010 by the FPA and DPIPWE of the procedures for managing threatened species that were then incorporated in the Threatened Species Fauna Advisor decision-making tool.
- An independent expert panel reviewed the biodiversity provisions of the FPC with subsequent changes (Biodiversity Review Panel 2009). The FPA also reviewed its monitoring and assessment protocols that include assessment of compliance with the threatened species provisions contained within the Code (See also Section 3.2.1).

Recommendation 17 concerned the improvement of knowledge of threatened species, the efficacy of current management procedures and the need for broader monitoring of individual species or groups of species. FPA and DPIPWE have worked jointly to develop effectiveness monitoring projects in wood production forests and the FPA put greater emphasis on a landscape approach to the conservation of biodiversity with greater protection of biodiversity rich areas within the production forest landscape as opposed to a solely species by species or coupe by coupe approach.

Management of threatened species is a major focus of the RFA. Significant resources have been devoted to the conservation of these species and particularly the Tasmanian devil and migratory parrot species. Detail of these efforts and

population monitoring and management of a number of other threatened and vulnerable species is listed under SOFR Indicators 1.2a,b and c.

There are 18 ongoing RFA commitments to threatened species, five that have been progressed and one that will be considered as part of the RFA renewal/ extension (Table 2c).

Judging the overall success of threatened species management and the broader biodiversity outcomes under the RFA is difficult given the limited monitoring of outcomes (effectiveness) as noted in Recommendation 17 of the 2007 Review. The position improved towards the end of the review period as the FPA developed a small effectiveness-monitoring program (FPA 2012) to monitor the biodiversity provisions of the FPC but there does not appear to be a comparable program for biodiversity in reserves or a framework in place to understand the contribution of the components of the landscape (public and private reserves, wood production forest) to threatened species and overall biodiversity conservation. Individual species monitoring will help to build a knowledge base that can be complemented by broader macro and more strategic studies (Wardlaw *et al.* 2012). The latter study demonstrated that in the Southern Forests Experimental Forest Landscape (SFEFL) the RFA had so far been effective in maintaining mature forest biodiversity based on sampling of three ecologically diverse focal groups – birds, vascular plants and flighted beetles in production forests.

The hypothesis testing approach of Wardlaw *et al.* (2012) needs to be extended to test other tenants of the RFA in relation to biodiversity conservation i.e. a more system assessment approach as well as a focus on threatened species. This will require sufficiently powerful assessments that will detect differences that matter in terms of the populations of key species groups. The need for better biodiversity monitoring data and reporting to assess RFA performance was discussed in the review of the EPBC Act (Commonwealth of Australia 2009, Chapter 10,10.25 dot points 3-6).

The submissions on threatened species covered a number of themes. The ‘RFA exemption’ and the adoption of strategic assessments are policy decisions for the Parties noting that the RFA was in place before the proclamation of the EPBC Act and the RFA establishment process had many elements of a strategic assessment. This matter is discussed in detail in the review of the EPBC Act (Commonwealth of Australia 2009) and Recommendation 38 of that review provides a template that might be incorporated in a renewed or extended RFA if the exemption was to be continued. Clearance of significant areas of threatened communities on private land in the absence of compensation is noted as falling outside the RFA and can be considered under the EPBC Act. Threatened species recovery plans are the mechanism for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act (TCFA Clause 5).

One submission suggested that Tasmanian policies and legislation do not provide equivalent protection to the EPBC Act. This is the other side of the coin in terms of the ‘RFA exemption’ and is likewise a matter for the Parties and outside the scope of this review. However, it is noted that there has been progress to enhance alignment between State and Commonwealth jurisdictions, including the current process to align threatened species assessment and listing processes, as well as the

approaches to assessment and approval underpinned by other bilateral agreements. Within the RFA itself the decision to discard the RFA priority species approach in favour of listed threatened species has improved consistency between jurisdictions.

The submissions identify lack of monitoring or effectiveness assessments as a deficiency in judging the outcomes of the RFA. Discussion of the equivalence or otherwise of legislative protections is somewhat academic if the data is not adequate to assess the performance of the system (CAR and private reserves, and conservation oriented forest practices) that is in place for conserving broader biodiversity not just threatened species. At present there seems to be a greater knowledge of biodiversity in production forests than in reserves and there is a need to build knowledge for both to determine the success or otherwise of the integrated land management approach of the RFA. This would support the need for greater investment in biodiversity assessment and research by DPIPWE and the FPA.

One submission claimed research results are not being translated into management practices to protect biodiversity and protected species. This review did not find evidence to support this contention. As one example, the Threatened Species Adviser planning tool of the FPA is subject to ongoing revision as new information becomes available. That is not to say the two-way communication between researchers and managers could not be improved to facilitate adoption of research outputs or that synthesis of research results could not be enhanced to assist managers and public communication on threatened species management (see also Section 3.2.5 below).

In a broader sense the submissions indicate the need for better synthesis of information about the overall status of biodiversity conservation and the adoption of improved practices. SOFR presents factual information but with limited interpretation whilst the FPA biodiversity monitoring reports and other research reports are dispersed. The State has an opportunity to review, synthesize and interpret information from the variety of sources to better assess the RFA biodiversity outcomes for the broader community. This could be done either as part of SOFR or as a separate report.

Recommendation 6: The Parties continue to improve the mechanisms in place to research, evaluate and communicate outcomes for the protection of threatened species and biodiversity across all forest tenures.

3.2.5 Forest Research *

Issues

Matters raised in submissions were:

- The reduction in R&D capacity (numbers) and capability (disciplinary skills) due to the end of program funding and organisational cutbacks

* The Section should be read in conjunction with Section 3.4. 4 (Industry Research and Development) where funds were provided through the RFA for wood processing research and applied development for the furniture industry.

- Priorities cited included ongoing research to support profitable value adding and innovation with plantation grown wood, development of monitoring RFA tools and a better understanding of the potential impact of climate change on Tasmanian forest ecosystems as a basis for adaptation strategies.

Analysis

The RFA has commitments to ongoing research (Clauses 88, 89) and additional commitments were made to research as a response to the 2002 Review and in the TCFA. These commitments are directed to improving forest management as research outputs became available, to make research results publicly available and to progressively review research priorities.

The Implementation Report lists 851 peer-reviewed journals, books and book chapters and technical reports, a majority of which have some relevance to conservation and production forest management in Tasmania, produced essentially over the review period. These publications are generally accessible (noting scientific papers are generally behind pay walls and only available for a fee at least in the first 1-2 years after publication). They are listed under the priority headings of biodiversity conservation and management, carbon budgets, fire, heritage and conservation, non wood forest values, pests, silviculture techniques, social and economic research, soil and water conservation in accord with Attachment 13 of the RFA. Ninety-three percent of the publications are in the five priority areas of biodiversity conservation and management, pests, silviculture techniques, social and economic research and soil and water conservation (SOFR 2012 Indicator 7.1e).

The R&D undertaken varies from basic research to applied development. The output is indicative of significant research activity during the period. Whilst changes have occurred as result of R&D, there are only a few attempts at synthesis or integration of the key elements of this research and assessment of its impact in terms of improved management practices, improved biodiversity outcomes, increased productivity, monitoring techniques or other measures. Two examples are the research related to the silvicultural alternatives to clear felling old growth and the alternatives to the use of 1080. Whilst it is worthwhile to make research publications available a valuable adjunct would be to develop more publications that seek to integrate and synthesise information and knowledge developed over a number of years and demonstrate its adoption as an indicator of progress in ESFM. Decision makers and managers should be making more demands of researchers in this area.

In line with Recommendation 4.11 from the 2002 Review research priorities were reviewed in 2006 by the Parties in conjunction with management agencies and R&D providers and provided, essentially as guidelines for investment, to research agencies. The Parties have the most impact on the objectives of research when programs are funded directly. A \$4 million R&D program on alternatives to 1080 was delivered in line with the TCFA commitment together with a \$2 million program (plus additional investment by Forestry Tasmania) on alternatives to clear felling in old growth. These programs have reduced the use of 1080 and the area of old growth subject to variable retention harvesting has progressively increased through the review period.

The TCFA (Clauses 70,71) provided for a collaborative partnership between the Parties and funding for the Tasmanian Devil Facial Tumour research program. The \$2 million program was completed early in this review period. The Commonwealth committed a further \$10 million from the Caring for Our Country Program over the period 2008-2009 to 2012-2013 for the Save the Tasmanian Devil program for both research and management initiatives.

The SOFR (2012 Indicator 7.1e) reported an R&D workforce of 127.3 FTE in 2010-11 (down from 146.7 in 2005-06) and expenditure of \$15.2 million (both public and private). The R&D capacity (number of people) and capability (range of expertise - disciplinary skills), however, has shown significant (but non quantified) change towards the end of the review period with the termination of Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Forestry, downsizing in the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and of research groups in State agencies and industry with the collapse of a number of forest companies during the review period. Reduced investment has removed coordination mechanisms (such as CRC for Forestry) and likely weakened links between researchers and decision makers. The sub critical nature of forest R&D groups in the State indicates the need for a new coordinating or cooperative structure for R&D both to better utilise existing resources and to channel any new resources into priority areas although this is matter for the organisations themselves rather than the RFA. R&D is, however, an important issue for the renewal/extension of the RFA that requires a prioritised and resourced R&D plan to support compliance reporting and ESFM and further improvements to forest management.

There were a limited number of priorities mentioned in submissions but profitable value adding of plantation grown wood was noted in several and the need for better RFA monitoring tools for threatened species and biodiversity has already been discussed (Section 3.2.4).

There is one ongoing commitment to the availability of research publications (Table 2 i).

Recommendation 7: The Parties consider the development of a resourced and prioritised Research and Development Plan as part of the RFA renewal/extension.

3.2.6 Integrated Catchment Management - Water Yield and Quality

Issues

The matters raised in submissions were:

- Further steps need to be taken to protect water quality and through prevention of logging in catchment headwaters and limitations on steep country logging
- The State Government has stopped the Pesticide Water Monitoring Program (2014).

Analysis

The RFA commitments (Attachment 10.1, 10.2 together with Clause 69 of the TCFA) focused on setting new standards for water quality and developing a State policy on integrated catchment management. There have been a number of initiatives and changed approaches since the signing of the RFA and detailed background up to 2007 is provided in the 2007 Review and is not repeated here. That review made five recommendations that are the starting point for this assessment. The 2007 Review also noted two developments since the RFA was signed that had heightened concerns about water management beyond the impact of normal forest practices – potential climate change and the rapid expansion of plantations in a number of catchments.

The State has continued to develop Water Management Plans under the *Tasmanian Water Management Act 1999* (Recommendation 19). Plan development has focused on catchments where major irrigation developments are occurring as a priority under the National Water Initiative commitments agreed by the State in 2009. This task is ongoing.

Improvements to catchment hydrological models (Recommendations 20, 21, 22) to better model the impacts of forest practices and plantation expansion have been completed. The DPIPW in partnership with the FPA has developed the Water Availability and Forest Land Use Planning Tool (WAFL). This model was trialled in the Ringarooma catchment using information contributed by agencies and forest industry and the results independently reviewed and publicly released. Testing provided confidence that the model is fit for purpose and is capable of predicting thresholds at which changes in water yields due to land use change become significant. The model is available for use by agencies and industry.

A major study, the CSIRO Tasmanian Sustainable (Catchment) Yields Project (2010), part of a broader National Water Initiative Project, modelled the impacts of catchment development and climate (commercial plantation forestry and future irrigation development, changing groundwater extraction, climate variability and anticipated climate change up to 2030) on water resources across 5 project regions covering 72% of Tasmania. Under the future climate future development scenario an increase in plantation forests across the 5 project regions of 5-16% would lead to maximum change in runoff of -2% with an additional 16% of plantations in the Mersey-Forth catchment. As these levels of reforestation are unlikely to be achieved in the foreseeable commercial environment, threats to catchment water yields for plantation development even under a reduced rainfall scenario seem minimal. The combination of the WAFL and the results of Sustainable Yields project report allow the State to undertake a risk-based approach to water interception and extraction activities (Recommendation 23). These and other studies support the view that reforestation of up to 15-20% of larger catchments has minimal impact on catchment flows (Parsons *et al.* 2007).

The incorporation of measures to enable the management of the impacts of forest practices on catchment water yields (Recommendation 24) did not proceed during the review period. Draft provisions were prepared for incorporation in a revised

Forest Practice Code but the revision of the Code was suspended during the review period.

Implementing the State policy of establishing standards for water quality (RFA Attachment 10.1) has been ongoing during the review period. The State policy on water quality management has led to the definition of Protected Environmental Values for all surface waters in Tasmania and water body specific quality objectives. Water quality data monitored in the catchments are available through the Water Information System of Tasmania (WIST). The FPC was amended to help meet the water quality objectives.

Under Clause 69 of the TCFA ‘the Commonwealth provided \$1 million to catchment water quality program developed and delivered in consultation with the State and drawing on CSIRO expertise.’ The principal output was adaptation of a CSIRO modelling tool to create the Pesticide Impact Rating Tool (PIRI) for predicting risk to water quality of using particular pesticides under various site conditions. The tool is available for use by agencies and forestry companies.

The State undertook a pesticide water-monitoring program from 2005-2014 across a number of catchments with significant forestry and agricultural activity. Over this period there were small number of detections of forestry chemicals but at low levels and none exceeding the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

The impact of forestry activities on water quantity and quality was a significant issue at the time of the 2007 Review but a better understanding of the actual and potential impacts of forestry on catchment water yields and the collapse of plantation expansion seem to have alleviated public concerns.

Only two matters were raised in submissions – protection of catchment headwaters and steep country logging and pesticide monitoring. In relation to the former, overland sediment flow in steep country may threaten water quality for freshwater species and consumptive uses. In sensitive habitats this may require additional conservation or increased buffers for forestry operations to protect catchment values. If forestry operations are undertaken in such areas there may need to be some adaptation of the provisions of the FPC. For pesticides there has been a recent policy change to a risk based approach (rather than a cessation of monitoring), a matter outside the scope of this review.

There are four ongoing commitments to water management (Table 2 f).

3.2.7 Environmental Management Systems and Forest Certification

Issues

One submission commented on this topic stating that certification schemes are a marketing device for loggers and certification should not be endorsed in place of legislative requirements for forest planning and practices. Several submissions suggested that the Good Neighbour Charter should be revived and formalised within the FPC.

Analysis

Environmental management systems and independent third party certification do not guarantee long-term ESFM, rather they endorse management practices compatible with best available knowledge of sustainable forest management. They are an assurance of legality and that forests and forest operations are being managed in a responsible manner.

The RFA (Clause 93, Attachment 5) commits the State to the development and implementation of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) (consistent with ISO 14000) for forests across all tenures. The 2002 and 2007 Reviews also made recommendations around EMS implementation.

Forestry Tasmania and the private forestry companies have now typically operated under environmental management systems for a decade or more. EMS provide the basis for independent third party forest certification that might be expected to bring further management system improvements and operational outcomes. Forestry Tasmania and most major forest growers have achieved certification from the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) under the Australian Forestry Standard AS 4708-2007 or the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or both in some cases and have undertaken auditing and renewal processes (typically every three or five years).

In response to the 2007 Review (Recommendation 25) the Tasmanian Government undertook to develop and implement an EMS for land managed under the Tasmanian *National Parks and Reserve Management Act 2002* by June 2011. Parks and Wildlife Service have developed a number of components that form the basis of an EMS. However, full implementation of an EMS across the reserve system was not fully achieved during the review period (see Section 3.2.3 for further consideration of this matter).

Implementation of environmental management systems/certification on smaller private land holdings is more problematic given the costs associated with system development and maintenance or a market incentive and hence uptake has been low. Environmental standards of private forestry operations will in the main continue to be governed by the FPC.

The Good Neighbour Charter was a plantation industry initiative that has been taken up by Forestry Tasmania and reflected in their procedures for engagement with neighbours. Charter use by private industry declined with the reduction of industry activity during the review period. Several submissions suggested the Good Neighbour Charter be revived and formalised within the FPC. Private industry now sees neighbour engagement as being covered through certification schemes and whilst some firms may not have certification the Charter is available as a template. A protocol for engagement with neighbours is a level of operational detail not relevant to the RFA and the responsibility of proponents of forest operations.

3.2.8 Wildlife Management and 1080

Issues

One submission claimed a lack of active forest management was leading to increased numbers of browsing animals that threaten commercial viability of some farms in the Circular Head Municipality. Another noted that the State Government (2014) had overturned a ban on the use of 1080 despite the RFA banning its use in State forest and an alternative control R&D program funded under the RFA.

Analysis

The TCFA Clauses 38, 39 cover the use of 1080 in forestry operations. As a result, the use of 1080 in public forests was phased out by December 2005.

Clause 39 committed the Parties to a joint program to accelerate research into and implementation of alternative strategies for browsing animal control on private forest and agricultural land. The Commonwealth provided \$4 million for the program managed through DPIPWE. A final report from the program (April 2011) was published via the DPIPWE website.

The R&D program took a holistic approach to the management of browsing animals and generated improved knowledge of browsing control options, the costs of different options as well as the potential for the deployment of a combination of approaches to manage browsing. The program did not, however, provide a complete suite of cost effective alternatives and it remains likely toxins will need to be used as the most cost effective option in the future albeit at much reduced levels and much more selectively as part of integrated control strategies. One compound, trade marked FeratoxR (cyanide capsules) was identified, as a potentially more humane poison than 1080 but approval for its use in Tasmania has not been sought.

During the review period the use of 1080 declined dramatically with only approximately 0.4kg used in forestry operations in 2009-10. By the end of the current review period the use of 1080 in the industrial forestry sector in Tasmania had essentially ceased due to the collapse of the Managed Investment Scheme (MIS) sector and new plantation establishment and limited hardwood plantation re-establishment during the review period. One major plantation development company (Gunns) had, prior to the company entering administration, made the decision in 2010 to cease the use of 1080 because it believed enough alternatives to 1080 were available.

Wildlife management plans (TCFA Clauses 40-42 - specifically wallabies and possums) that involve commercial harvesting as a component of population management have undergone some development. The Parties report a possum management plan is in place but that wallaby management plans approved by State and Commonwealth regulatory bodies on King and Flinders Island lapsed because of lack of markets and land holder support.

Given the fluctuating interest around wildlife management, the State considers any further wildlife-harvesting plan would be developed on a State-wide basis with any necessary approvals sought under the EPBC Act.

Submissions indicate browsing animal populations and cost effectiveness of control methods remain of some concern for primary industries. It is unclear what influence the management of forest adjacent to agricultural land has on browsing animal populations. Changes in State policy in relation to the use of 1080 since the review period are outside the scope of this review.\

3.2.9 Fires and Smoke Management

Issues

Matters raised in submissions were:

- Better bushfire management strategies required particularly for reserved forest
- Burning in wilderness areas such as the Tarkine is not scientifically justified
- Forestry fire management is inadequate as many plantations lack adequate or maintained firebreaks
- Declining revenue from forestry compromises fire fighting capability and forest access both for fire fighting and other forest users
- Impact of fuel reduction burning on public and private land should be assessed under national environmental laws applicable to logging operations
- State government fuel reduction policy has hectare-based targets rather than more strategically targeting the risk of bushfires in populated areas (2014-2015).

Analysis

Commitments to fire and smoke management are covered in the RFA (Attachment 10.7), the 2002 Review (Recommendation 4.16) and the 2007 Review (Recommendations 26, 27) and appear to have been met prior to or during the review period. An issue of concern for the 2007 Review was the availability of documents but this aspect now appears to have been overcome with significant fire planning and management documentation available via websites such as the State Fire Management Council and the Tasmanian Fire Service.

During the review period, the State Fire Management Council developed and endorsed the State Vegetation Fire Management Policy (May 2010). It was revised in 2012. The policy is based on the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed Indicative National Bushfire Principles. The release of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission report in 2010 has led to further consideration of fire management in Tasmania. These activities were initiated in this review period but have been completed since 2012. A revised approach involves a strategically targeted (risk based) approach to fuel reduction that is tenure blind but will increase the area fuel reduction significantly over the recent average of around 16 000ha per

annum during the review period. This risk-based approach allows account of drought conditions and longer-term climate change.

In 2007, the FPA in consultation with the PWS, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and forestry sector developed a coordinated Smoke Management System to regulate emission of smoke from planned burns. It is based on a bidding system for burn units within an air shed on suitable days for burning. The system is managed by the EPA and applies to forest regeneration and prescribed burns. It has been reviewed and revised following implementation over the period 2008-2011. This system combined with the reduced area of regeneration burning appears to have alleviated, to some degree, community concerns in relation to smoke.

Some of the matters raised in submissions were of a general nature or beyond the scope of this review including fire management strategies for reserved forest, the objectives of burning in wilderness areas and revised State Government fire management policy. The loss of fire fighting capability (professionals trained in fire behaviour and management and ancillary skills such as machinery operators and tree fellers) as forest tenure has changed and the native forest industry workforce has been reduced is seen as an issue in other States as well as Tasmania. As part of the response Governments have recognised the need for more fuel reduction burning to minimise the risks of high intensity wildfires that can result in loss of human life and property as well as cause significant ecological and environmental damage. The environmental impact of fuel reduction burning is also a matter beyond the scope of this review although it is noted there are no key threatening processes related to burning listed under the EPBC Act. The adequacy or otherwise of fire protection measures for plantations appear to be a matter for the owners of those resources and the local fire authorities.

As for water management, policy initiatives endorsed through COAG have complemented or superseded RFA commitments in relation to fire.

There is one ongoing commitment to fire policy communication (Table 2 f). Sustainability indicator 3.1b (SOFR 2012) provides data on planned and unplanned fires in Tasmanian forests over the review period.

3.2.10 Utilisation of Harvest Residue

Issues

A number of the submissions objected to the (re) inclusion of native forest biomass in the RET (Renewable Energy Target) on the basis that it could subsidise continued native forest logging and have adverse environmental impacts.

Analysis

Clauses 57 and 58 of the TCFA refer to the possible utilisation of harvest residues for biomass energy plants and the need to monitor biodiversity impacts of increased removals of wood from harvested coupes. This is taken to mean non-merchantable material (large branch or low quality or small diameter log material). The level of

merchantable material left in harvested coupes is apparently small (2007 Review). Increased removals potentially improve the economics of harvesting and make for easier site access and preparation for regeneration in natural forests.

Whilst there have been proposals for biomass energy plants in Tasmania (Southwood, Gunns) none were established during the review period. Native forest biomass was included in the RET from 2001 to 2011. That no biomass energy proposals proceeded in that time suggests the economics of using harvest residues (as opposed to wood processing waste) in energy production are lacking or that the sovereign risk was perceived as too high due to the risk of policy change. It is likely any future developments in Tasmania would be small scale and integrated with regional industry that might be both residue producers and energy users. The (re) inclusion of native forest biomass in the RET is a recent legislative change (June 2015) and out of scope of this review.

Removal of large volumes of non-merchantable material from native forest regeneration sites or harvested plantations is contestable in biophysical terms because of the potential impact on the nutrient resources of the sites and biodiversity. The former is less likely to be an issue in Tasmania where soils are generally deeper and more fertile compared with less fertile sites in some other parts of Australia. Woody debris is important for biodiversity conservation, particularly larger diameter residual material thus restricting the potential for additional biomass removal from native forest harvest sites. There is significant scientific information available on this matter that can inform prescriptions and monitoring if such residue recovery were to occur in the future (Baker and Grove 2012, Rothe *et al.* 2015).

There is one unutilised commitment in relation to harvest residues (Table 2 j).

Recommendation 8: The Parties ensure any future prescriptions for harvesting non-merchantable biomass from native forest coupes are developed and monitored using the available scientific knowledge.

3.2.11 IFM - Plantations and Regrowth Management

Issues

Matters raised in submissions were:

- Plantations – MIS arrangements for forest plantations should be terminated
- Any future plantations should be restricted to non-contentious locations and agricultural land be protected from plantation development
- Productivity of plantations established on native forest sites is not always as predicted and a review of plantation forests is needed with a view to reconversion of marginal plantations or inappropriately sited plantations to native forests
- Potential sale of hardwood plantations (or cutting rights) established and managed with RFA/TCFA funding would have a negative impact on future public wood supply and potential for future industry development (2015).

Analysis

Intensification of forest management (IFM) to compensate for the transfer of forests to the CAR reserve system and changed silviculture in old growth forests was an important element of the RFA (Clause 101, Attachments 12.14-12.16) and the TCFA (Clauses 33,34) to meet legislated wood supply targets (RFA Clause 77). This was to be achieved by thinning of selected regrowth stands to accelerate saw or veneer log development and the establishment on public forest land of plantations to achieve the same purpose. The conversion of public native forest to plantations ceased in 2007.

A major program of IFM funded by the Commonwealth was completed during the first review period and a second program commenced following the signing of the TCFA and was active during this third review period. Since the signing of the RFA there was significant plantation establishment on private land driven by MIS for short rotation pulpwood production.

In aggregate terms there were approximately 309 000 ha of plantation in Tasmania at June 2011; 233 000 ha of eucalypt (an increase of 74 000 ha since 2006); and 75 600 ha of softwood plantation (a decline of 4 100 ha over the 2006-2011 period). The latter was in spite of an additional 3 200 ha of softwood being established under the RFA (Attachment 12.16) and mainly reflected conversion of softwood to short rotation hardwood plantation. New plantation establishment dropped to negligible levels following the collapse of MIS companies in the period 2008-2010.

The TCFA program, under Clause 34 of the agreement, is reported as substantially completed during the review period with 12 463 ha of new eucalypt plantations established and investment in the plantations by pruning (23 392 ha*) and fertilising (16 180 ha) as well as 3 387 ha of regrowth forest thinned (as at 31 December 2010). The original target for plantation establishment under the TCFA program was 16 000 ha but the cessation of native forest clearing meant this target could not be achieved and the funds were invested in other aspects of IFM. Forestry Tasmania established approximately 25 300 ha of plantations and thinned approximately 8 000 ha of regrowth forest during the period 1998 – 2011 under the RFA/TCFA programs.

The RFA/TCFA IFM programs represent joint investment by the Parties of \$172 million from 1997 - 2012. Total expenditure for the TCFA program was \$66 million from the Commonwealth and \$49 million from the State of Tasmania. Acquittal reports for the program were provided to the Commonwealth in accordance with requirement of Clause 79 of the TCFA and a financial audit undertaken.

A performance evaluation of the TCFA IFM program was conducted in 2012 (Wettenhall 2012). This evaluation concluded the program had generally been well implemented but that the adequacy of the program in meeting the TCFA IFM objectives was being compromised by an inability to fully undertake the required silviculture (pruning but particularly thinning) due to market and financial constraints.

*This figure is reported in the Implementation Report and is assumed to include the cumulative area of plantation pruned i.e. the same plantation maybe pruned up to three times. Wettenhall (2012) reports 8304 ha pruned from 2005-2011.

In terms of the matters raised in submissions the potential sale of plantations (or of the cutting rights) established under the RFA/TCFA and the future for MIS arrangements for forestry are policy matters outside the scope of this review. The productivity and commercial viability of some of the plantations established on public and private land would seemingly be matters for the owners of those resources. If plantations on public forest land are commercially non viable one option is to reconvert to native forest but no indication of the need or potential scale of such a change was available to the reviewer. Most plantation wood from private land will be sold as export woodchips through lack of a domestic value adding opportunity and the landowners will elect to continue with plantation or convert to or sell off for agricultural uses. One submission called for more resources to be directed to intensive plantation management as an alternative to native forest harvesting.

There are no ongoing commitments to IFM following the completion of the RFA/TCFA programs.

3.2.12 Climate Change

Issues

Matters raised in submissions were:

- Concern about the impact of climate change on forest ecosystems *per se*
- Native forest logging is a net source of carbon emissions and forests are more valuable as carbon stores and should be protected as such
- RFA renewal/extension needs to give climate change a higher priority.

Analysis

The interaction between climate change and forests has emerged as a more significant issue since the RFA was signed. The RFA only made reference to climate change as an agreed research priority (refined in the 2007 Review of research priorities) including impact on long-term ecological processes, forest health and pest susceptibility and productivity.

The 2007 Review noted there had been few publications specifically addressing the issue up to the completion of that review. Recommendation 28 of that Review *'sought 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'*.

Since the 2007 Review there has been further investment in research to improve understanding of carbon stocks and flows in Tasmanian forests, mainly in forests managed by Forestry Tasmania (e.g. Moroni *et al.* 2010), together with studies such as that of Battaglia *et al.* (2009) forecasting impact of increasing carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere and future rainfall and temperature scenarios on plantation productivity. ABARES (2011) undertook a broader analysis of forest growth and yield

under different climate change scenarios and the potential consequential downstream socio economic impacts.

A major study of Tasmanian forest carbon stocks and flows under a range of land use and climate scenarios was published (May *et al.* 2012). This study developed a Forestry Carbon Modelling Framework utilising forest growth data and referencing fire and harvesting regime data combined with spatial data for climate, soil and forest type and other variables. Whilst uncertainties remain and the outcome of individual scenarios are sensitive to small changes in the assumptions made, the study was a considerable advance in terms of modelling carbon stocks and flows for Tasmanian forests. Installation of a carbon flux tower at the Warra Long Term Research Site (as part of TERN infrastructure)—shortly after the end of the review period advances data collection capability and the opportunity to understand the impact of factors such as high temperature events and drought on carbon sequestration in a major Tasmanian forest type.

SOFR (2012) provided estimates of total forest biomass (above and below ground and combining native forests and plantations) for 2006 and 2010 under Indicator 5.1a using the National Inventory System. This suggested a small decline in total biomass over the period but the estimates are recognised as '*reflecting the imprecision of contemporary calculation methods and data sources*'. In addition the data appears inconsistent with that reported in May *et al.* (2012).

Submissions raised concerns about potential ecosystem changes under climate change, the contribution of Tasmanian forests to carbon storage and the value of that carbon (or the incremental change in carbon stock) if it could be monetised. For the former, there is a need for eco-physiological research to understand the response of key forest species to increased carbon dioxide and temperature as basis for better understanding likely impacts of climate change. Section 3.2.3 considers the need for a forest condition-monitoring framework that can assess the impacts of short and longer-term threats to the productivity and sustainability of forest ecosystems, including climate change, across all tenures. Mechanisms for the creation of verifiable carbon credits for native forests appear to have substantial challenges (May *et al.* 2012) although national and international policy in relation to carbon markets continues to change and evolve.

In summary there has been progress in understanding carbon stocks and flows in Tasmanian forests and the potential effects of harvesting, fire and climate change. There remains an opportunity to use new data as it becomes available and the latest modelling tools to refine and periodically update the May *et al.* (2012) study and if necessary assess changes to forest management. The State should determine a more detailed and accurate approach for reporting of SOFR Indicator 5.1(a) using the National Inventory System data.

There is one ongoing commitment in relation to climate change (Table 2 f).

3.2.13 Old Growth Forest Management

Issues

No issues were raised in the submissions on this topic apart from one noting 5.6% of wet eucalypt forest had been cleared since 1996 and this may impact biodiversity.

Analysis

The TCFA introduced commitments (Clauses 30, 31, 32) relating to the management of old growth forest on public land. The Parties agreed to fund a R&D program to support the State policy of achieving non clear felling silviculture for 80% of annual harvest area in old growth forest.

A \$2 million R&D program *Alternatives to clear felling in old growth forests* operated from 2006-2010. The programme encompassed research and field trials including economic analysis and was independently evaluated by an international science panel. It demonstrated that the variable retention technique can achieve good silviculture and biodiversity outcomes, and be safely implemented in old growth forests.

The extension of the variable retention system to regrowth forests should also be considered to assist in the retention of more mature (or maturing) forest elements in the landscape.

Information on areas of old growth harvested by clear felling and variable retention are shown in Table 15 of the Implementation Report. This indicates there was a progressive increase in the area harvested by variable retention over the period but the 80% target in the target year (2010-11) was missed by a small margin.

The commitment to report the area of old growth harvested on public land each year (Clause 31) was met via Forestry Tasmania's Annual Stewardship Report. Clause 32 was met by an independent review undertaken in 2007 and publication of a report by Forestry Tasmania *A new silviculture for Tasmania's public forests* in May 2009.

Subsequent to the review period, old growth forest harvesting has been significantly reduced as a consequence of further reservation, areas protected by management prescription, and through requirements for certification.

There is one ongoing commitment requiring the public reporting of the area of old growth harvested by silviculture technique each year (Table 2 i).

3.2.14 Private Land Management

Issues

Matters raised in submissions in relation to private forests have been dealt with elsewhere including that there should be more private forest reservation (Section 3.1.2), concerns with the Permanent Native Forest Estate policy (Section 3.2.15) and

that the FPC is not stringent enough or enforced adequately (this Section and Section 3.2.1)

Analysis

There is an ongoing commitment in the RFA (Clause 58) with respect to private land to ensure compliance with the FPC, development of mechanisms to protect conservation and catchment values and undertake initiatives specified in RFA Attachment 9, 10, 11 and 12. The most specific commitments in the Attachments are 9.8 (native vegetation retention and riparian management) and 12.20 (expanding involvement of private owners in the industry). The 2007 Review recommended (Recommendation 29) better auditing of, and public reporting of, regeneration success after harvesting on private land.

These commitments have been met during the review period. Whilst 9.8 was met prior to and reported on in the 2002 and 2007 Reviews further mechanisms relevant to this commitment have been implemented over this review period. These include amendments of the FPC and the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002* providing additional protection for threatened native vegetation communities across all tenures, annual limits on native forest conversion on individual properties, and range of incentive schemes to promote native vegetation retention.

In relation to 12.20 many private landowners participated in MIS planting. The collapse of MIS companies left many landholders and investors with major uncertainty in terms of ownership and management of plantations and financial losses. Establishing new ownership and management arrangements for former MIS plantations has now been largely completed. A number of other small scale initiatives were undertaken under this commitment to establish plantations, areas of riparian vegetation and improved management of existing forest on private land that are detailed in the Implementation Report.

In response to Recommendation 29 from the 2007 Review, the FPA undertook a major audit of regeneration on private land (FPA Annual Report 2010-11). This audit showed regeneration success (stocking level and species composition approximating the harvested stand) was less on private than on public land but satisfactory in over 80% - 87% of coupes during the review period although there were often deficiencies in documentation of regeneration checks. Compliance reporting is included in the FPA Annual Report and SOFR Indicator 2.1e summarises regeneration performance across all tenures on a five yearly basis.

3.2.15 Land Clearing - Permanent Native Forest Estate Policy

Issues

The matters raised in submissions encompassed several themes:

Policy and opportunity costs

- Enact land clearance legislation for public and private land incorporating the Permanent Native Forest Estate (PNFE) policy

- The PNFE policy had been watered down without public consultation allowing large scale clearing on private land
- The raising of the threshold from 80 to 95% (TCFA 2005) restricted the opportunities for forest conversion to more productive and higher value end uses and a new land use assessment process is required that gives higher priority to economic and social development
- The reporting and monitoring of vegetation clearance is not comprehensive and fragmented amongst different agencies.

Compensation

- Applications for compensation by private landowners (FPA/ *Nature Conservation Act 2002*) need to be resolved in a specified timeframe and compensation be more as of right
- The regulations that allow conversion if compensation has been denied should be abolished.

Review

- The 2015 State review of the PNFE requires a fully consultative process particularly with private landowners.

Analysis

The development of the PNFE policy (RFA Clause 60 and Attachment 9) and its revision in response to the 2002 Review and new commitments in the TCFA (Clauses 45, 46, 48) were documented in the 2007 Review. That review considered the many commitments to have been met including the implementation of the policy within the statutory legislative framework of the *Forest Practices Act 1985*. The former allows the FPA to implement State legislation on vegetation clearing with the powers to ensure compliance and to report annually (quarterly reports are also available) on vegetation clearance (based on certified Forest Practice Plans) via its Annual Report. Longer-term data is reported in Indicator 1.1a in SOFR (2012).

During the review period revisions to the PNFE policy were made in 2009 and 2011 to set limits on clearing of native forest at a State-wide level and to clarify terminology and implementation mechanisms. The current minimum retention thresholds are 95% of the State-wide 1996 native forest estate to be maintained and at least 50% of the current area of each native forest community in each bioregion. A further review will be undertaken in 2015 as a related action to this review.*

Considerable detail on forest vegetation changes is available under SOFR (2012) Indicator 1.1a. For the period 2006-11 it is reported that PNFE data collated via FPPs overestimate the extent of change (difference between gross area and net area that might be harvested) whilst Indicator 1.1a data derived from satellite mapping and other sources under estimated the extent of change due to limitations on satellite imagery for 2011. Overall the data indicate that at the end of the review period the State was close to the 95% retention threshold and that the losses in a

* (www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/forestry/native-forest).

number of communities listed under Schedule 3a of the *Nature Conversation Act 2002* may be significant.

The impact of the PNFE policy for the period 2000-2014 is shown in the FPA Annual Report 2013-2014. This indicates the rate of native forest clearing has dropped from around 16 000 ha per annum to approximately 2 000 ha per annum. This does not support the contention in one submission that the policy had been watered down allowing large-scale clearing on private land. Submissions highlighted cases post the review period where vegetation clearing for agriculture was proposed but large scale clearing for agriculture falls outside the provisions of the RFA and can be considered under the EPBC Act.

The PNFE appears to have operated as intended during the review period. The timeliness of the determination of compensation and the potential for clearing following refusal of compensation seem matters of legitimate concern. The comprehensiveness of vegetation clearance data given that local government approvals and activities by utilities may not be included also needs to be considered. It seems desirable to create a consolidated database of vegetation clearing, potentially through the FPA or DPIPW and that such data could be used to progressively update the mapping of native forest cover through TasVeg.

As the PNFE policy is being reviewed in 2015 matters raised in submissions to this review, including the generation of improved data on native vegetation clearance and compensation should be considered in that context.

Recommendation 9: The State considers matters raised in submissions to this review, in relation the PNFE, as part the 2015 State PNFE review and the outcomes be incorporated in any revised PNFE and recognised in a renewed /extended RFA.

3.2.16 National Estate/ Heritage Protection

Issues

No matters were raised in submissions on the National or State Heritage lists. Matters were raised in relation to protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage including that the substantive intent of the RFA to protect aboriginal cultural heritage had not been met, legislative reform to replace the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975* had not been completed and Aboriginal community support for the resource guide for managing cultural heritage in wood production forests.

Analysis

Prior to the 2007 Review amendments to the EPBC Act (in 2003) meant that the Parties no longer considered RFA commitments to the national estate relevant. A number of the RFA commitments had been met prior to the 2002 Review. As a result of the amendments the Commonwealth Government was no longer entering or removing places from the Register of the National Estate. Beyond listings of sites on the National Heritage List the State would be responsible for determining if sites

listed on the Register of the National Estate should be considered under State legislation.

The 2007 Review made four Recommendations (30 - 33) in recognition of national estate values and their protection. In response to Recommendation 30, the Parties confirmed their commitment to the management of national estate values in line with remaining relevant conditions in RFA Attachment 1. Recommendation 31 suggested amendments to the RFA to take account of the changes in Commonwealth legislation. The Parties decided not to pursue this course during this review period but rather consider this recommendation in any RFA renewal/extension process.

Recommendation 32 dealt with the treatment of current places on the Register of the National Estate. The Parties report that approximately 90% of places on the Register of the National Estate for historic or cultural heritage are now included in the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

Recommendation 33 followed up on an RFA commitment (and 2002 Review recommendation) to revise the FPA archaeological manual to address all matters other than Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage but further revise the manual as required to take account of the proposed Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Protection Act. The FPA issued an 86 page *Resource Guide for Managing Cultural Heritage in Wood Production Forests* in September 2012 that covers aboriginal cultural heritage sites and other historic sites. It has subsequently been revised. The proposed State Aboriginal heritage legislation was not enacted during the review period (see Section 3.6.4).

Matters raised in submissions have been covered above. The comment that the substantive intent of the RFA for the protection of aboriginal cultural heritage had not been met was, on follow-up, in the context of the lack of enactment of legislation to replace the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*.

There is one ongoing commitment to heritage protection, three that have been progressed and one commitment that will be considered as part of the RFA renewal or extension process (Table 2 e).

Recommendation 10: The Parties follow-up on their response to the 2007 Review to ensure that compatibility of the RFA with Commonwealth heritage protection legislation is considered as part of the RFA renewal/ extension process.

Section 3.2 Summary

The commitments have been largely met for the forest practices system, threatened species and communities, forest research, integrated catchment management, environmental management systems and certification, fire and smoke management, wildlife management and 1080, intensive forest management and plantations, old growth forest management, private land management and the PNFE policy with ongoing improvements for forest management in the State.

There have been important improvements to the decision support tools for the Forest Practices Code, development of models to predict water interception by plantations and to predict the potential for pesticide applications to contaminate surface waters and implementation of smoke management system for regeneration and fuel reduction burns. Variable retention silviculture for old growth forests became operational and alternative methods developed for control of browsing animals. Intensive forest management programs have been satisfactorily implemented creating an additional saw and veneer log resource from 2027 onwards.

Management planning for reserves remains incomplete. A new performance and monitoring system for reserve management has been developed. It remains difficult to determine the overall outcomes of the system and practices in place to conserve biodiversity through limited effectiveness monitoring and assessment in both reserves and wood production forests although it is more advanced for the latter. Commitments relating to harvest residue utilisation were not invoked during the review period and some progress was made in understanding the impact of potential climate change on forest ecosystems. The procedures for managing national estate values were altered during the review period and commitments for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage were not fully met.

3.3 Wood Resource

3.3.1 Sustainable Yield

Issues

Matter raised in submissions were:

- The legislated minimum sawlog supply target or quantity should be abolished
- Sustainable yield should be independently assessed prior to setting legislated volumes and audited after major wildfire events.

Analysis

RFA clauses 75 - 77 deal with wood supply and legislated sustainable minimum sawlog supply (also known as minimum aggregate target supply or quantity) from public forest. The sustainable sawlog yield is normally reviewed every five years (including independent assessment and progressive improvements to the methodologies e.g. West 2007/2008, Brack and Vanclay 2012). A review was completed in 2007, ahead of the 2007 Review. No re-evaluation of the sustainable sawlog yield has been completed for this review due to the policy uncertainty towards the end of the review period concerning future forest access and calculations of sustainable yield. A review was completed in 2014. The sustainable sawlog yield is currently based on native forest supply and plantations are only expected to supply sawlogs from 2027. However, apart from the delay of the sustainable yield review, the terms of the RFA have been met through this review period.

Discussion of the risk issues around sustainable yield is provided in the 2007 Review and Ferguson (2012) and will not be repeated here. The 2007 Review recommended

(Recommendation 35) more information be made publicly available in relation to the quality of logs supplied to the processing sector from public forest. This recommendation has been completed with Forestry Tasmania publishing new indicators of log quality since 2009 as part of its Annual Stewardship Report.

SOFR Indicator 2.1c provides data for the period 2006 - 2010 on wood removals for all sources of supply and compares removals from State forests with the sustainable sawlog yield. The harvest of wood from public forest diminished over the period especially in 2009 and 2010 due to lower market demand. As a result the annual harvest averaged approximately 80% of the SMSS over 2006-2010 period. A similar under harvesting of special timber species was also recorded.

One submission suggested more independent assessment of the sustainable yield calculations. There have been numerous independent reviews of the system of sustainable yield calculation for public wood production forests as noted above and further independent assessment beyond that already undertaken does not appear justified at the present time. Many scenarios are evaluated in calculating the sustainable sawlog yield including making allowance for the 'average' impacts of fire and pests on forest growth and an additional allowance (or headroom) for other changes that might impact on growth and yield whether biophysical or from further constraints on harvesting under the FPC. A catastrophic wildfire that killed a significant proportion of the growing stock would require a recalculation of the sustainable sawlog yield that if significant under current arrangements would need to be reflected in amended legislation.

One submission called for the abolition of the legislated sustainable sawlog yield (minimum aggregate target supply or quantity). Ferguson (2012) suggested the need for revision of the basis for calculating sustainable yield by moving from the legislated supply target or quantity to a maximum allowable harvest to fully implement the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) sustainable yield principles. The reasons for such a transition are argued in Ferguson (2012). However, it is understood the approach taken to calculating the sustainable sawlog yield is to run various yield scenarios based on forest area, growth rates etc and then determine a sustainable sawlog yield rather than start with a target and plan accordingly. Thus, there is adaptive capacity in the system.

There is one ongoing commitment to improving transparency in reporting and improving methodology of assessment for sustainable yield of high quality sawlogs from public forests (Table 2 h). The RFA renewal/extension process will provide an opportunity for this commitment to be reviewed.

Recommendation 11: The Parties continue to include regular reviews of the sustainable sawlog yield as an element of a renewed/extended RFA.

3.3.2 Special Species Timbers

Issues

Matters raised in submissions were:

Access and supply

- Lack of special species timber resource security with significant reduction in supply through the TCFA and Tasmanian Forest Agreement (TFA) and consequent escalation in price
- Special timber species harvesting should/ should not be allowed in reserves or FPPZL land included within the TWWHA
- New special timber species management plan being developed under the *Forestry Act 2014* should be integrated into a renewed or extended RFA
- There is need to calculate the sustained yield of non-Blackwood species.

Management

- Future harvesting of special timber species should be through selective or partial harvesting with minimisation of immature tree harvesting.

Supply management

- The management of the Wooden Boat Board Bank lacked transparency and accountability but if properly administered is a valuable sector initiative that should be taken forward in the RFA renewal/ extension.

Analysis

The special species timber industry (mainly craft, furniture and boat building) is a small but a high value adding sector of the Tasmanian forest industry with an estimated annual turnover of \$70 million and employing over 2000 people (Farley *et al.* 2009).

Commitments in regard to special species timbers were made in the RFA and the TCFA and were subject to recommendation (6.12) in the 2002 Review (see 2007 Review for background). The 2007 Review followed up on that recommendation with a further recommendation (Recommendation 36) to complete a special species timber strategy.

Approximately half the forest area available for special species timber production was removed as a result of the TCFA. In response to the 2002 and 2007 Review recommendations, the TCFA reduction and TCFA Clause 56, a detailed Special Species Timber Strategy was developed by Forestry Tasmania and reported by the Parties as meeting the commitment. The strategy was released for public comment in 2009 and the final strategy published in 2010. The strategy set an annual supply target of 12 500 cubic metres of log volume per annum, predominately Blackwood. The annual log supply target was seen as consistent with the notional sustainable yield of the available resource. The strategy was based on the themes of sustaining the resource, maximising value and promoting products to the markets.

Total special species timber harvest over the years 2008-2009 to 2011-2012 was in line with the strategy although with a progressive decline in non-Blackwood volumes. This latter trend has continued subsequent to the review period.

In response to Clause 44 of the TCFA the State constructed 72 km of new roads to improve access to selected areas of special timbers and to support the apiculture industry. The program was completed in 2007-2008.

The management and supply of special species timbers remains an important issue as indicated by matters raised in the submissions. The RFA has not provided durable resource security to the special species timber sector with the significant reductions in supply under the TCFA and reductions in supply in part due to reduced old growth harvesting and further forest reservation in the latter part of the review period. One submission drew attention to the special species timber initiatives (Attachment 12.27 and 12.28 of the RFA) where both Parties agreed initiatives to increase supply. Despite intentions these initiatives have not been effective.

One of the major issues for the special species timber industry is irregular supply and demand. To manage supply risk, business may need to invest significant capital in stock to meet future demand. This matter was addressed for the boat-building sector by the establishment of Wooden Boat Board Bank (Attachment 12.28). According to one submission this initiative utilised a \$200 000 Commonwealth establishment grant, and experienced governance and accountability problems during the review period. The concept and its possible extension to a broader special species timber wood bank was considered in one submission to be a valuable initiative for the sector that should be continued under a renewed/extended RFA.

Several of the matters raised concern policy decisions (impact of the TFA on supply and proposals for selective or partial harvesting in reserves (TWWHA or not)) and development of a new State special species timber plan are beyond the scope of this review.

Recommendation 12: The State ensures matters raised in submissions to this review in relation to the management, supply and marketing of special species timbers be considered through the development of the new State special species timber management plan and the outcomes recognised in a renewed/extended RFA.

Section 3.3 Summary

The commitment to independent review of sustainable sawlog yield was met during the review period. The commitment to provide a review of the sustainable sawlog yield to coincide with this review was not met due to policy uncertainty. The total harvest was on average approximately 80% of the estimated sustained yield during the review period. Commitments to the supply of special species timbers became more difficult to meet over the review period. Attempts to manage the irregular supply of and demand for special species timbers have only been partially successful.

3.4 Industry Development

3.4.1 Resource Security

Issues

The main issue raised in submissions was that the RFA had not provided resource security for the forest industry, whether hardwood processing or special species timbers (Section 3.3.2).

Analysis

The RFA was intended to provide industry with certainty of access (resource security) to agreed levels of wood resources from the reduced area of public forest available for wood production, following the establishment of the CAR reserve system. Any significant changes to access levels during the 20-year period of the RFA were to be compensated by either the State or Australian Government depending on responsibility for any changes in resource access.

Longer-term certainty of wood supply as a consequence of the additional reservations under the TCFA was addressed by an expanded program of investment in intensive management of regrowth forests and additional plantation development, largely completed during this review period (RFA Clauses 75,77 and TCFA Clauses 33,34) (See Section 3.2. 10).

Some submissions noted that the RFA had not provided resource security although it should be noted the RFA always contained compensation mechanisms if resource access was reduced. The industry essentially had resource security during the review period but suffered a significant decline as a consequence of changing markets, a high exchange rate, the GFC and an ENGO campaign focussed on industry markets. Resource security or certainty of access is thus a necessary but not sufficient condition for a successful industry.

Future resource security obviously depends on policy durability. A renewed or extended RFA should retain appropriate compensation clauses for any further industry structural adjustment.

3.4.2 Industries Development Strategy and Value Adding

Issues

No matters were raised in the submissions on this topic except in the general sense that social and economic objectives had not been accorded the same priority as environmental objectives in the implementation of the RFA.

Analysis

RFA Clause 74 and Attachment 12 cover industry development issues. Attachment 12 has been the subject of extensive comment and analysis in both the 2002 and 2007 Reviews.

Both reviews recommended the preparation of an updated industry development strategy although the 2002 Review recommended it be led by the State and the 2007 Review by industry. The Parties report that the Forest and Forest Industries Council (FFIC) completed a *New Forest Industry Plan* in 2010. This plan is now outdated - overwhelmed by the GFC related industry consolidation, downsizing following the collapse of MIS and processing companies including Gunns, and the closure of Tasmanian Papers two mills, market contraction and the ongoing policy uncertainty around the industry.

In relation to the wood and wood products industry development clauses of Attachment 12, the Parties have reported against clauses 14,16,18,19, 20, 21 as suggested in Appendix 4 Table 1 of the 2007 Review. Comment on clauses 14 and 16 are given elsewhere in this review. Against Clause 18 the Parties report numerous actions in education and information provision, research (covered in Section 3.4.3), furniture design and harvesting technology that appear to satisfy the intent of the Clause although there has been no attempt to assess the impact of the activity.

TCFA Clauses 53-56 provided for further industry assistance. The Tasmanian Forest Industry Development Program (TFIDP) consisted of three sub sector investment (adjustment assistance) programs administered by the Australian Government and completed during the review period. The TFIDP provided \$42 million to assist the Tasmanian native forest timber industry to improve its efficiency and return on investment. The Tasmanian Country Sawmillers Assistance Program invested \$4.2 million to improve utilisation of small logs and increase value adding. The Tasmanian Softwood Development Program invested \$13.5 million in improved harvesting and processing technology. All programs generated co-investment greater than the Commonwealth investment.

A high level evaluation of TFIDP was conducted (Ernst &Young 2011). This evaluation made a number of recommendations for the more efficient and effective implementation of any such future programs. The program was considered to have been effective at least temporarily in contributing to the introduction of new technologies, improving efficiency across parts of the value chain and benefiting employment in the industry. However, due to the major down turn in the industry during the review period the overall benefits of the program were diminished with the loss from the industry of a number of grant recipient businesses. The evaluation suggests the need for careful consideration of the objectives and timing of programs such as TFIDP to maximise longer-term benefits.

The 2007 Review recommended a revision and rationalisation of Attachment 12. The Parties decided not to implement this recommendation but agreed to take up any industry development – adjustment assistance matters as part of the RFA renewal/ extension process.

The Parties will need to determine if further specific industry development initiatives are justified during the RFA renewal /extension process, or whether the industry is sufficiently robust to benefit from generic support such as support for R&D through tax concessions and Australian Government matching of industry levy contributions for R&D and other innovation incentive programs.

There are no ongoing obligations in relation to the industry provisions of the RFA.

3.4.3 Information, Education and Marketing

Issues

One submission supported a branding and marketing strategy for wood produced from Tasmania's sustainably managed forests as part of a new or extended RFA. Another raised the future status and capacity of the Forest Education Foundation.

Analysis

As noted in Section 3.4.2 information, education and promotion commitments are scattered through a number of Clauses of Attachment 12 some of which were reported as completed during the first 10 years of the RFA.

Under TCFA Clause 12 the Commonwealth contributed \$2.2 million to a communication program developed in consultation with the State that was completed in 2008/2009. The latter provided information about the TCFA and a contribution to the Forest Education Foundation to promote education and knowledge of the Tasmanian forest industry in schools.

Prior to and since the end of the TCFA communication program, information and education about the forest industry has been conducted by individual organisations using their own resources (whether from government or industry) and industry participation in a generic marketing and promotion program.

Examples of the former include Forestry Tasmania that has an active information dissemination program around all aspects of its policies and operations, Private Forests Tasmania that produces a range of information papers and forest management and marketing information, and the Forest Education Foundation supported by forest industry and Forestry Tasmania that develops and delivers school based education resources, field experience for students and development programs for teachers. In addition a range of State, Commonwealth and other industry bodies maintain websites that provide information on forest management, wood utilisation, markets and promotion and forest certification. The 'Tasmanian Timber' website established by the University of Tasmania operated through the review period to promote the use of Tasmanian timbers, provide technical, sustainability and supplier information. The Tasmanian Timber Design Centre, established in 1991 has continued to provide a high quality museum collection of contemporary wood design.

The generic timber and wood products marketing and promotion program initiated by the industry service company Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA) in 2008 expanded in scope and reach during the review period. The program seeks to improve public understanding of wood products and their environmental credentials including carbon storage in a time of public concern on climate change. It is funded by levies collected by Australian Government on behalf of industry. Such a program was deemed necessary by industry and is a guide to future development (and responsibilities) in this area.

Marketing the sustainability of Tasmanian wood products in domestic and international markets by the Parties (TCFA Clause 72) was supported by the development of promotional material (print and video) in several languages and number of Government-industry delegations to key markets. Whilst one submission called for a new program in this area as part of a renewed/extended RFA, the reality is such a program, unless well executed and supported over the long term, is likely to have only a transient effect. A more permanent solution would appear to lie with internationally accepted forest certification.

The collective activities undertaken by the Parties and industry can be deemed to satisfy Recommendation 40 from the 2007 Review. Over the review period the responsibilities for information, education, marketing and promotion appear to have been appropriately differentiated between governments and industry.

One submission noted that the Forest Education Foundation funding had been affected by the decline in forest industry activity, and will need to seek new opportunities and funding to maintain its programs.

3.4.4 Industry Research and Development

Issues

No matters relating to industry R&D during the review period were raised in submissions although as noted in Section 3.2.5 matters of future R&D priorities were raised.

Analysis

Specific downstream industry R&D commitments are found in Attachment 12, Clause 18. The major priority was R&D to assist the industry transition from old growth to profitable processing of regrowth and plantation resources for a variety of products and value adding via furniture manufacturing. There were two avenues for delivering this commitment. RFA funds of \$1.6 million were allocated to FFIC (that ceased to operate in 2013) to invest in projects with research providers focusing on sawing and drying of young eucalypts and dissemination of the results to industry. FFIC subsequently invested \$700 000 of the RFA funding in CRC for Forestry. Together with CRC funding this enabled a total (CRC) program investment of an estimated \$2.1million over 7 years (2005-2012) in sawing and drying of plantation eucalypts.

The FFIC and CRC programs and subsequent R&D have provided a good understanding of and overcame many of the technical issues (sawing and drying) for processing plantation eucalypts for solid wood, veneer and engineered wood products, although the profitability of processing the resource remains problematic for some products and there are opportunities for new product development. The outputs and conclusions have been summarised in reviews (Washusen 2011, 2013) and other reports - Forrester *et al.* (2013), Hague (2013) and Blackburn and Nolan (2014).

CRC Wood Innovations was active during much of the review period. Although Tasmanian industry firms were not direct investors in that CRC some other Australian hardwood industry participants were. In spite of claims that microwave drying offered the potential for rapid, defect free drying for young eucalypts, CRC Wood Innovations did not demonstrate technology that could meet these claims cost effectively.

Clause 18 also included a commitment to support furniture design and marketing for product lines suited to larger scale production for medium to high-end value markets. The then Tasmanian Department of Industry and Economic Development assisted furniture designers and manufacturers to attend trade and promotion events. No evidence has been provided that there were commercial outcomes from these applied development activities including meeting the central objective of product designs suited to higher volume production.

Processing plantation wood profitably remains an ongoing R&D priority and is noted in Section 3.2.5.

3.4.5 Pulp Mill

Issues

One submission suggested the Gunns pulp mill permit be quashed and the *Pulp Mill Assessment Act 2007* be rescinded.

Analysis

TCFA Clauses 60 and 62 relate to major project status and environmental approvals process for the proposed Gunns pulp mill in the Tamar Valley as part of an attempt to increase on shore value adding to Tasmanian forest resources with consequent economic benefits to the State and local communities.

Although these commitments were reported as completed in the 2007 Review further approvals of modules of the Environmental Impact Plan required under the EPBC Act were approved by the Commonwealth Minister in March 2011. These approvals specified the mill could only use plantation timber and a modified bleaching process to that initially approved.

Shortly after the end of this review period the proponent went into administration with subsequent liquidation and sale of assets. The pulp mill licence was one of the assets offered for sale.

Rescinding the *Pulp Mill Assessment Act 2007* and quashing the mill permit/licence is a policy matter for the Parties and outside the scope of this review.

3.4.6 Skills and Training

Issues

No matters were raised in the submissions on this topic.

Analysis

Skills and training commitments included in RFA Attachment 12 were mostly reported as progressed at the time of the 2007 Review and that review provides extensive analysis of the outcomes. These were essentially generic government skills and training programs with no specific RFA related investment.

Under TCFA Clause 66, the Commonwealth committed \$4 million to fund and administer a program to support improved skills development and training. ForestWorks Ltd an industry owned and managed national training advisory body delivered the program from 2006 to completion in September 2010 (as the Forest, Wood, Paper and Timber Products Industry Skills Enhancement and Training (SET) Project). While the project was carried out across the Tasmanian forest industry it was designed to deliver benefits to the forest industry nationally.

Training priorities were agreed in October 2007 and are listed in the 2007 Review. The onset of the GFC required changes to the program to adapt to the recessionary environment. The Parties report benefits from the program included, expert advice and support to industry firms, better engagement with training providers, and individual skills improvement and career development prospects. Project activities and outputs are detailed in the SET Overview Report (2010 a). In spite of the adaptive approach taken to reflect changed industry conditions it is likely that the benefits of the investment were diminished as a result of the industry down turn and the significant job losses in the industry during the review period.

SET was not independently evaluated but an internal evaluation was undertaken and is described in the SET Technical Report (SET 2010 b).

3.4.7 Infrastructure

Issues

No matters were raised in the submissions on this topic.

Analysis

The 2007 Review accepted that RFA commitments related to improving industry infrastructure had been completed, with the exception of the TCFA Clause 59 roading and industry infrastructure program funded by the State. This commitment sought to further improve access to old growth forests to help compensate for lower volumes harvested through variable retention silviculture and to provide service infrastructure to the wood processing centres in the Huon Valley and Smithton established by Forestry Tasmania with joint venture partners. The TCFA program was completed in 2009-10.

Section 3.4 Summary

The RFA/TCFA commitments to industry development, infrastructure and marketing were generally met although it is difficult to assess the output and impact in several cases. These initiatives in totality were not enough to retain major sections of the industry in the face of shifting markets, the GFC, commercial business decisions, competitiveness issues and environmental campaigns. Industry adjustment assistance and investment in skills and training was valuable in contributing to the introduction of new technologies, improving efficiency across parts of the value chain and benefiting employment in the industry. However, due to the major down turn in the industry during the review period the overall benefits of the programs were diminished with the loss from the industry of a number of grant recipient businesses and major job losses across the industry.

Significant progress was made in overcoming technical issues in relation to processing plantation timber, particularly *Eucalyptus nitens*, although the profitability of processing plantation logs for higher value uses remains problematic.

3.5 Other Forest Uses

The RFA made provision for other forest uses including tourism and recreation, mineral exploration and mining, apiculture and minor extractive uses such as tree ferns.

3.5.1 Tourism and Recreation

Issues

No matters were raised in the submissions on this topic.

Analysis

Extensive background and progress on implementing RFA commitments on tourism and recreation is provided in the 2007 Review and will not be repeated here.

Under TCFA Clauses 67 and 68, the Commonwealth and State committed to a total investment of \$5 million in tourism infrastructure. The State provided \$2 million to the

Forestry Tasmania tourism project at Maydena – the Eagles Eyrie the construction of which was completed in 2009 at a total cost of \$6.5 million. The facility was transferred to the PWS in November 2013.

The Commonwealth funded the Tasmanian Forest Tourism Initiative (TFTI) to develop tourism infrastructure focussing on the new reserves created by the TCFA. The TFTI included two programs, the Tasmanian Forest Tourism Development Program (\$2 million as noted above) and the Tarkine Bushwalk Program (\$1 million). The Parties report that 8 projects were completed as part of the latter program including new infrastructure and visitor interpretation facilities, walking tracks and a mountain bike path. The TFTI was completed in 2009-10.

SOFR indicator 6.3a details the area of forest available for general recreation and tourism and 6.3b the range of recreation and tourism activities available and visitor numbers to selected parks and reserves. The limited data indicate showed declining visitor numbers across the whole reserve and State forest system across the review period.

3.5.2 Apiculture

Issues

No matters were raised in the submissions on this topic.

Analysis

The RFA (Attachment 12 Clause 29) committed the State to complete the implementation of the protocol for leatherwood honey management on all public lands throughout the State as agreed by the key stakeholders. This commitment was subject to recommendations in the 2002 and 2007 Reviews (Recommendation 41) although the emphasis shifted from one of resource and access management to a plan for the future of the apiary industry. The 2007 Review indicates that access had been addressed in a protocol implemented from 2003.

In response to Recommendation 41 of the 2007 Review and recognising the cross tenure nature of apiculture, the FFIC formed an Apiary Working Group that included representatives of the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association, public land managers and the forest industry. Whilst some progress on development of an apiary industry plan was made, the Parties report that the plan was not completed due to the differing interests of commercial stakeholders.

The Tasmanian Government reports on ongoing liaison to promote a consistent approach to apiary site management across land tenures. Forestry Tasmania reached an agreement with the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association in 2011 on long-term site access and fees for apiary sites in State forests. Forestry Tasmania also consults on any potential impacts on apiary sites from forest operations. The PWS has issued 10-year licences for all apiary sites in reserves.

In response to TCFA Clause 44, \$3 million was spent on additional access roads for the multiple purpose of access for special timber species, leatherwood stands, apiary sites and old growth forest.

One of the concerns for the apiculture industry has been the harvesting of forests where leatherwood is a significant component, but as old growth harvesting has been reduced this concern has diminished. With reduced forestry operations and road closures (or inability to maintain road infrastructure), access for beekeepers will likely remain a locally contentious issue.

SOFR Indicators 2.1d and 6.1a provide information on the value and volume of honey production in Tasmania.

There is one ongoing commitment to work with the apiculture industry (Table 2 g) but the commitment to develop an industry plan as part of the RFA no longer appears appropriate.

3.5.3 Mineral Exploration and Mining

Issues

Other than the call for a ban on mining in formal reserves already noted (Section 3.2.3) no other matters were raised in the submissions on mineral exploration and mining.

Analysis

RFA Clauses 79, 80, 81, 82 and Attachment 12.25 and 12.26 cover the terms and conditions relating to mineral exploration and mining in specified parts of the CAR reserve system. The Parties report these ongoing commitments have been met during the review period.

All applications for mineral exploration are referred to the Mineral Exploration Working Group and approved proposals must adhere to the Mineral Exploration Code of Practice. The latter has been reviewed to ensure its compatibility with the TRMCoP. Both codes are to be reviewed on the same five-year cycle.

During the review period, the total CAR reserves area disturbed by mining exploration was 15.09 ha of which approximately half was rehabilitated immediately. The total area in CAR reserves or State forest with high quality wilderness values was 9.21 ha. At June 2011, 5.29 ha of this area remains to be rehabilitated over the life of the tenement.

The Parties should consider the appropriateness of the four ongoing commitments to mineral exploration and mining in CAR reserves in the RFA renewal/extension process (Table 2 g).

Section 3.5 Summary

Commitments made in relation to tourism and recreation were completed, commitments to apiculture have been met as far as stakeholder agreement allows, and there has been ongoing implementation of the mineral exploration and mining clauses of the RFA.

3.6 Data, Reporting and Legislation

3.6.1 Data Use and Availability

Issues

No issues were raised in the submissions on this matter.

Analysis

The Parties agreed implementation and monitoring of the agreement depends on mutual access to relevant data held by the Parties (RFA Clause 90). Clauses 18 and 19 of the TCFA also address this matter. The Parties report that the one ongoing commitment was met during the review period.

Three ongoing commitments to public reporting are listed in Table 2 i.

3.6.2 Financial Assistance

Issues

No matters were raised in the submissions on the performance of RFA /TCFA funded programs that operated during the review period.

Analysis

Funding by the Parties to implement specific RFA commitments under Clauses 100 and 101 were completed prior to the 2002 Review or were reported on in the 2007 Review.

The TCFA funding commitments by the Parties are summarised in Attachment 2, Table 1 of the TCFA. A number of these programs were finalised during the review period and the outcomes considered in the relevant sections of this report. These programs were delivered under Commonwealth Grant Guidelines (now Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines, www.finance.gov.au).

The 2007 Review noted the significant expenditure by the Parties on implementation of the RFA/TCFA and recommended (Recommendation 42) independent financial and performance audits of the effectiveness of the programs for (a) the protection of forest communities on private land (b) intensive forest management, and (c) industry development and restructuring.

In response to Recommendation 42, all three programs were subject to independent evaluation with reports published on the web. The assessment report on the TCFA Forest Conservation Fund program examined drivers for, and barriers to, participation in the competitive tender program and made 24 recommendations that might improve any future program. The performance assessment of the TCFA IFM program is covered in Section 3.2.11. The evaluation of the TFIDP is assessed at Section 3.4.2.

While these programs have undergone some form of ex post facto evaluation or performance assessment, such evaluations should be inbuilt as part of the project initiation and completion processes to ensure appropriate data is collected through the implementation of the program.

The total RFA/TCFA expenditure by the Commonwealth is summarised in Table 1. There are no ongoing financial commitments by the Commonwealth for RFA /TCFA implementation.

Recommendation 13: If the Commonwealth should implement any significant future RFA funding program it should establish clear performance and evaluation measures.

3.6.3 Monitoring and Reporting

Issues

Matters raised in the submissions were:

- That the monitoring mechanisms in place to determine if the RFA is achieving the desired outcomes are inadequate
- The availability on socio economic data
- Insufficient evidence of improvements to the independence and compliance monitoring as promised by the Commonwealth in response to the review of the EPBC Act in 2009
- The comprehensiveness and accuracy of some of the SOFR data was questionable.

Analysis

The RFA commitments to consultation and reporting on the implementation of the RFA and its outcomes are outlined in Clauses 72 and 73 and its five-yearly review in Clauses 45 and 46. Attachment 11 provides details of ongoing and new reporting commitments. The latter were completed during the first review period.

The Parties report the ongoing commitments were met during the review period by the organisations listed or their successors with the exception of the listing of places on the Register of the National Estate a matter that is no longer relevant. It is noted that the CRC for Forestry (successor to the CRC for Sustainable Production Forestry) closed at the end of the review period.

In terms of matters raised in submissions the limitations of monitoring and assessment of the outcomes of the RFA in relation to biodiversity and threatened species is covered in Section 3.2.4.

The SOFR, published in October 2012 is a significant compilation of information on all aspects of the forests and all forest based industries in Tasmania. Both the 2002 and 2007 Reviews reported a major deficiency in the availability of data, at the appropriate scale, on the socio economic value of the wood and wood products industry, the forest contact industries such as beekeeping, ecotourism, reserve management and the multiplier effect of direct forest employment in Tasmania. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has not published employment data specific to the forest industry since 2002, such data is now being aggregated with agriculture and fishing. Better socio economic data was considered essential by the 2002 and 2007 Reviews

(Recommendations 5.1 and 43 respectively) to determine the benefits or otherwise of government initiatives in the sector and to help all sections of the community understand the status of the industry.

In response to Recommendation 43, the Commonwealth developed a Forest Industry Database (2010) including employment data but this database has not been updated since its development in 2010. During the review period the CRC for Forestry undertook employment surveys in 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2011. The results are summarised in SOFR Indicator 6.5a (see also Indicator 6.5c) and showed the loss of over 2300 jobs in the wood and wood products sector from 2008 to September 2010. A further 1600 were confirmed or were expected losses by the end of July 2011.

These major job losses occurred across both the native forest and plantation sectors and were attributed to a number of factors including the impact of the GFC on market demand, lack of competitiveness due to the high Australian dollar during the review period, market campaigns by environmental organisations, the collapse of MIS companies and the closure of uncompetitive processing facilities. Employment in the apiary industry and reserve management was relatively stable across the review period.

The job losses since June 2011 and beyond the review period have continued, partly in response to economic conditions but also due to further changes flowing from the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement (2011).

With closure of the CRC for Forestry there is no co-investment to undertake the socio economic studies that might inform future policy. Governments need to determine how to meet the need for reliable, longitudinal socio economic data across all the industry subsectors from forest management, harvesting, wood processing, craft and furniture making and apiculture.

One submission suggested the need for a new socio economic study comparing the data at the time the RFA was initiated to the present data, as part of the RFA renewal or extension process. It is uncertain the value of such a study to the RFA renewal/ extension process as the latter will need to assess the current socio economic contribution of the forest based industries. Such a study may be performed

as a postgraduate research project as occurred in response to the consequences of the Western Australian RFA (Loxton *et al.* 2014) given the interaction between changes brought about by the RFA and the adverse industry conditions during the review period. The report of Schirmer *et al.* 2014 should also be noted.

One submission claimed there had been an inadequate response to the review of the EPBC Act (Commonwealth of Australia 2009). The Australian Government response was tabled in 2011 (Commonwealth of Australia 2011). In relation to RFAs, the review made two recommendations concerning (a) independent performance auditing, reporting and sanctions for serious non-compliance with RFA terms, and (b) that information about the number and nature of complaints about RFA (forest) operations be made publicly available. Apart from the delay in this RFA review (that was agreed by the Parties), the Tasmanian RFA does not present examples of serious non-performance as listed in Recommendation 38 of that Review. Through the FPA investigation and enforcement protocols, compliance mechanisms are in place for forest operations and the results of enforcement actions are made publicly available.

The State of the Forests Reports produced by both Parties (State of the Forests Tasmania 2012 report, Australia's State of the Forests Report 2013) are major investments by the Parties in the collation of information on forests and forest utilisation and the capacity to progressively assess trends across indicators of forest condition and use.

One submission raised concerns around the comprehensiveness and accuracy of some other aspects of the SOFR data. Instances of concern in relation to the adequacy of data about carbon stocks and vegetation clearance have already been noted elsewhere in this review. In terms of data accuracy, those responsible for preparation of the Australia's SOFR (2013) consider the SOFR (2012) report to generally meet a high standard (Davey pers.comm.). It is not clear how some of the data adequacy concerns can be addressed. There is limited data in some areas, and a lack of, or declining resources available to collect data across a number of areas covered by criteria and indicators. One option might be to focus on the essential indicators of ecological sustainability (rather than nice to have indicators) and ensure they are assessed to a high standard. There appears to be opportunities to simplify and perhaps evolve the indicator framework (e.g. the number of indicators under Criteria 6 and 7 could be rationalised) whilst contributing to the national and international reporting obligations on ESFM. This is a matter the Parties will need to address in the lead up to the preparation of SOFR 2017.

Recommendation 14: The Parties support an updated socio economic analysis as part of the RFA renewal/ extension process and periodic collection of socio economic data during the term of a renewed /extended RFA.

3.6.4 Legislation

Issues

The only matter raised in submissions was the need (or outstanding commitment) to reform the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975* with a stronger and more comprehensive framework for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Tasmania.

Analysis

The 2007 Review outlines the actions to meet the legislative commitments in the RFA including amendments to the RFA as a result of court judgements that were completed and reported on in that review. Only one outstanding RFA legislative commitment remains.

Clause 83 of the RFA committed the State to introduce legislation to replace the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. This matter was progressed through consultation and drafting but legislation was not introduced to Tasmanian Parliament within this review period.

It is noted that new Aboriginal heritage legislation was considered by the Tasmanian Parliament after the review period but was not passed.

Recommendation 15: The State considers improved mechanisms for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage as part of the RFA renewal/extension.

Section 3.6 Summary

The commitments in relation to data use and availability and financial assistance have been met. Three of the major programs supported the RFA/TCFA (private forest conservation, intensive forest management and industry development and restructuring) were independently evaluated. Collection and reporting of socio economic data was undertaken during the review period through the CRC for Forestry but that mechanism is no longer available with the closure of the CRC for Forestry. The SOFR, published in October 2012 was a significant compilation of available information on all aspects of the forests and all forest based industries in Tasmania. New Aboriginal Heritage Protection legislation whilst introduced to Parliament as per the RFA commitment has not yet been enacted.

3.7 Overall Assessment of RFA Outcomes

Issues

Several submissions raised matters in relation to the overall outcomes of the RFA to date.

RFAs are long-term landscape level planning agreements seeking to balance environmental, economic and social outcomes. As might be expected, there are differences of opinion as to where the balance should be struck. One submission

claimed the RFA was against the public interest but of course there is no single or immutable public interest.

Opposing views were expressed in submissions on the RFA outcomes. The main issues/comments are listed in Table 4 and 5 but the key themes are summarised below:

- *Compliance with the agreement conditions* - lack of adherence to RFA processes required for the agreement to meet its objectives. TFA forest reservation and TWWHA expansion (processes initiated in this review period but completed beyond the period and hence out of scope for this review) were seen to override the RFA and not follow any agreed process.
- *Balance of outcomes* – the RFA has not protected forest environmental values, in particular threatened species. An alternative perspective was the RFA has focused on environmental outcomes with insufficient attention to social and economic outcomes.
- *Performance monitoring* – the RFA does not have sufficient performance monitoring tools to determine if agreed goals are being met, versus a great majority of RFA/TCFA commitments have been met with resultant continuous improvement of forest management in Tasmania.
- *Capacity to integrate new issues or threats* – the RFA does not adequately deal with new issues as they arise.
- *Communication* – there has been insufficient communication/community engagement on the outcomes of the RFA.

Analysis

In terms of compliance with the terms of the RFA /TCFA, the Parties have met the great majority of the commitments, actions and recommendations of the RFA/TCFA and the 2002 and 2007 Reviews. In terms of overall outcomes an assessment can be made against the objectives of the RFA set out in the recitals section of the RFA:

- Provide certainty for conservation of environment and heritage values through the establishment of a CAR Reserve System. *Comment: This has been achieved although there are ongoing refinements of the existing reserve system and demands for more reservation of both public and private forest.*
- Provide for the ecologically sustainable management and use of forests in Tasmania. *Comment: ESFM is defined as perpetuating ecosystem integrity while continuing to provide wood and non-wood values; where ecosystem integrity means the maintenance of forest structure, species composition, and*

- *the rate of ecological processes and functions within the bounds of normal disturbance regimes*. Significant progress has been made under the RFA through forest reservation (public and private forest land), reductions in harvest, improvements in forest planning and practices and protection of biodiversity. There is a comprehensive ESFM framework in place as a result of the systematic but often unrecognized steps that have been taken. The challenge remains to improve the monitoring and assessment of the key indicators of ESFM across all forest tenures and continue to demonstrate sustainable management can deliver multiple values and services at the landscape level*
- *Provide for future growth and development of Tasmanian Industries associated with forests and timber products. Comment: This has not been achieved for the native forest based industry as a consequence of economic conditions and broad market forces. Plantations are an increasing source of export hardwood chips in the absence of domestic processing opportunities. There may be some progressive reduction in the area of the private plantation estate depending on its commercial viability*
- *Assist with the development of forest-based tourism and recreational opportunities based on Tasmania's environmental advantages. Comment; Whilst infrastructure has been improved and expanded, visitor numbers declined over the review period*
- *Provide for certainty of resource access to the forest industry. Comment: Partially achieved with compensation paid when changes were made through the TCFA. Resource security or certainty of resource access is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a successful industry*
- *Provide for certainty of resource access to the mining industry. Comment: Achieved although with a low level of exploration and mining activity in reserve areas*
- *Remove relevant controls in relation to application of the Export Control Act 1982 (Cwth.). Comment: Export controls were removed following independent review of the FPC*
- *Introduce a range of new or enhanced initiatives to assist with forest based development. Comment: A number of programs were supported to develop a plantation resource producing saw/veneer quality logs and assist the transition of the downstream industry to a younger wood resource to reduce dependence on native forest resources*

* This is a concise definition of ESFM. The RFA refers to the National Forest Policy Statement definition of ESFM. The NFPS does not provide a single definition of ESFM but lists the protection of the full range of forest ecosystems and other environmental values including maintenance of ecological processes, the conservation of biological diversity, heritage Aboriginal and other cultural values and protection of water quality and aquatic habitats as the major elements of the scope of ESFM.

- Encourage the development of forest-based research. *Comment: Forest research in Tasmania reached a high water mark during the first fifteen years of the RFA. The future outlook is much less encouraging*
- Encourage significant employment opportunities and investment throughout Tasmania. *Comment: This has not been achieved with significant reduction in the size of the native forest industry that has badly affected the economies of a number of regional communities.*

This is a mixed scorecard although not all objectives were of course of equal significance. This was reflected in the submissions with one view being that the RFA favoured environmental outcomes at the expense of economic and social outcomes, with another arguing there has not been adequate protection of environmental values and threatened species, despite the significant investment in these latter areas. This balance of outcomes remains a fundamental challenge for the RFA to reconcile. In part this goes to firstly the monitoring and assessing of performance and the capacity to demonstrate the outcomes sought are being delivered, and secondly communication and community engagement so the broader community is well informed.

Several submissions expressed concerns about the flexibility of the RFA and the capacity to integrate new issues with climate change and water as examples. An assessment of the Parties' responses when new issues or extant issues have assumed greater prominence (water and climate change in particular) have been raised through the 2002 and 2007 Reviews. The response by the Parties to these reviews demonstrates the RFA framework has the flexibility and capacity to integrate new issues.

One matter that is relevant to both the existing and a renewed or extended RFA is the progressive expansion in scope of the commitments and actions of the RFA (through supplementary agreements and review recommendations) and the increased complexity of the review process. As land tenure changes have been made, process and systems established or upgraded and regulations revised, there seems a significant opportunity to simplify the RFA to cover fewer areas, at a higher strategic level, with a greater emphasis on reporting outcomes. For example, matters such as catchment management, fire and smoke management, forest certification, cultural heritage (once new State legislation is in place), browsing animal management, and industries such as tourism and apiculture no longer appear to justify detailed inclusion in the RFA framework. This is due to the reforms or improvements that have been achieved, or the requirements of other legislation or policy frameworks such as those developed through COAG in relation to fire and water management.

Recommendation 16: The Parties consider the simplification of a renewed/extended RFA by dealing with fewer areas at a higher strategic level and with a greater emphasis on measuring and reporting outcomes.

3.8 A Renewed/Extended RFA

Clause 8 of the RFA stipulates that the process for extending the duration of the RFA will be agreed by the Parties as part of the third five-yearly review, due in 2012. The 2007 Review recommended (Recommendation 37) a process for identifying the key issues relevant to an extension of the RFA be considered ahead of the third review.

The Parties agreed to defer this review due to the Tasmanian Forest Agreement process and hence Clause 8 or Recommendation 37 (2007 Review) have not been fully progressed. The Parties remain committed to an extension of the agreement.

This review raises a number of key matters and makes a number of subsequent recommendations that might be considered as part of the RFA renewal/extension process. Neither the Implementation Report nor the submissions identified any genuinely new issues that should be considered in a renewed or extended RFA. Core elements of a renewed/extended RFA concern ongoing commitments (Table 2) and include reserve management, protection of threatened species and communities (forest practices system, private land management and the PNFE), monitoring, assessing and reporting (particularly biodiversity outcomes), forest and wood products research, harvest residue utilisation, climate change adaptation, resources and resource security, industry development, mineral and mining exploration, World Heritage and compensation.

In addition, many submissions made comment in relation to a renewed or extended RFA given the context that this review was being undertaken as precursor to that process. These comments are listed for the Parties in Table 4.

Key themes may be summarised:

- *Process of renewal* – stakeholders are interested in the renewal process and the opportunity for input.
- *Nature of the agreement* - a number of submissions supported the concept of 20-year rolling agreement subject to five yearly reviews. A variation was that the RFA should be declared a strategic assessment under the EPBC Act and subject to reassessment every five years.
- *Informing the new RFA* - preliminary assessments. Several submissions called for a new Comprehensive Regional Assessment (CRA) to inform the renewal process and help define the objectives of a renewed RFA. As a variation, one submission supported a new socio economic assessment that compared the present position with that at the initiation of the RFA.
- *Scope of the agreement and a focus on outcomes* - a renewed RFA should be restricted in scope with fewer commitments and milestones and a greater focus on outcomes and hence performance measures (Subject to recommendation in Section 3.7 above).

- *Legislative exemption* - forest operations and management should no longer be exempt from the requirements of the EPBC Act.
- *Confidence* - that an extended RFA can provide more certainty for investment and a framework for ongoing improvement in management of forests across all tenures.

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Tables and Attachments

Table 1: Australian Government funding for forests and forest Industries in Tasmania across the first 15 years of the RFA

Initiative	Commitment amount* (not adjusted for present values)
Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) 1997	Total: \$110.0 m
Intensive forest management (mainly for plantations)	\$57.0 m**
Industry development initiatives	\$13.0 m
New reserve management	\$1.0 m
Tourism infrastructure	\$3.0 m
Road infrastructure to increase productivity	\$6.0 m
Protection of conservation values on private land	\$10.0 m
Protection of conservation values on private land from the Natural Heritage Trust	\$20.0m
Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (TCFA) 2005	Total: \$216.6 m
Measures to support reductions in old-growth clear-felling, including research	\$2.0 m
Intensive forest management (mainly for plantations)	\$66.0 m**
Industry programs: Support for the hardwood timber industry	\$42.0 m
Support for country sawmills	\$4.0 m
Support for softwood industry	\$10.0 m
30 per cent top up	\$16.8 m
Communications	\$2.2 m
Tourism and recreation	\$2.0 m
Forest Conservation Fund	\$43.0 m***
Mole Creek	\$3.6 m
River catchment water quality auditing	\$1.0 m
Saving the Tasmanian devil	\$2.0 m
Tarkine bushwalk	\$1.0 m
Alternatives to 1080	\$4.0 m
Skills and Training	\$4.0 m
Special purpose payment	\$13.0 m**
Tasmanian Forest Contractors Assistance Program 2010	Total: \$22.4 m
Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement 2011	Total: \$277 m

* Actual payments varied slightly

** Direct payments to the Tasmanian government

*** Excludes a direct payment of \$5.5 million to the Tasmanian government

Table 2: RFA (including RFA, TCFA and recommendations from the 2002 and 2007 Reviews accepted by the Parties) ongoing commitments, yet to be completed or not yet required or unutilised commitments.*

<u>Clause</u>	<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Status (Assessment by the Parties)</u>
a. RFA Extension, review and program assessment (4)		
8	The State and the Commonwealth to jointly determine the process for extending the RFA	Not yet due
45	The State and the Commonwealth to review the performance of the RFA	First and second review completed, Third review to be undertaken
42	The Parties to identify major RFA and TCFA program financial commitments and undertake financial and performance audits and publish results	Substantially complete
79	The State to provide the Commonwealth with annual acquittal reports and proposed activity statement on IFM program funds	Ongoing commitment has been met
b. Reservation and reserve management (28)		
24(a) & 51	The State undertakes to manage areas in the CAR Reserve System identified in Attachment 6, with the exception of Commonwealth-owned or -leased land, on the basis outlined in that Attachment and in accordance with the relevant objectives set out in Attachment 7 The Parties will take action to establish the CAR reserve system and to manage the CAR values in a regional context consistent with the management objectives specified in Attachment 7	Ongoing commitment has been met Ongoing commitment has been met
48	CAR Reserve System is to be established for the purpose of ensuring long-term conservation and protection as per Attachment 6 and Attachment 8	Substantially completed
51	The Parties agree that they will establish the CAR Reserve System on the Public Land described in Attachment 6 and manage that system to maintain the CAR Values of that land in a regional context consistent with the management objectives for each element of the reserve system as specified in Attachment 7	Ongoing commitment has been met
56	The Commonwealth agrees that those areas of the Buckland Military Training Area leased by the Commonwealth from the State and not required for the CAR Reserve System will remain available to the State for timber production purposes, including plantation development	Ongoing commitment has been met

* The individual clauses from the RFA/TCFA have not been separately identified.

57	The Parties agree that any changes to those elements of the CAR reserve system in Informal reserves, will occur only in accordance with this agreement, will maintain the level of protection of identified values at the regional scale and that information on all such changes will be publicly available and provided to the person or body conducting the five-yearly review described in clause 45 for incorporation into the review process	Ongoing commitment has been met
Att 10.8.	The State to ensure that management plans are implemented: - for all State forest and National parks; and - for all other formal reserves	Completed for State forest prior to 2002 Five Yearly Review, further progressed for other reserves
Att 10.13	Management plans for Formal and Informal reserves identify the CAR values identified in the CRA and actions to manage those values	Ongoing commitment has been met
Att 10.11	Develop and implement a code of practice for reserve management	Completed prior to 2007 Five Yearly Review. Ongoing commitment has been met
3.1	The State continues to improve forest community mapping	Ongoing commitment has been met
3.2	The State reserves areas currently vested in the Hydro-Electric Corporation and identified in the RFA as indicative reserves	Progressed but not yet completed
4.3	The State completes the Reserve Management Code of Practice, commences implementation and undertakes annual reporting on compliance	Code completed Ongoing commitment has been met
4.12	The State develops an environmental management system for reserves and other public lands consistent with Attachment 5 of the RFA prior to the next five yearly review	Progressed but not yet completed
6	The Parties to protect one million hectares of old growth forest – 977,000 hectares on public land, 30,000 hectares minimum on private land	Substantially completed
7	The Parties to add approximately 141,000 hectares of public land to the CAR Reserve System	Substantially completed
14	The State to protect 3900 hectares of old growth forest on unallocated Crown land pending completion of the Crown Land Assessment and Classification Project	Ongoing commitment has been met
15	The State to protect 3500 hectares of old growth forest on Hydro Tasmania vested land pending a review of Hydro Tasmania's infrastructure management needs	Ongoing commitment has been met

15	Hydro Tasmania to covenant 1300 hectares of sub-alpine forest on its freehold land	Progressed but not yet completed
16	The Parties agree that any changes to those elements of the CAR Reserve System in Informal Reserves: - will only occur in accordance with the RFA; and - will maintain the level of protection of identified values at the regional scale; and that information on all such changes will be publicly available	Ongoing commitment has been met
17	The State to maintain records of all changes to informal reserves and net impact on CAR reserve values changes will be recorded	Ongoing commitment has been met
25	The State to establish conservation covenants on protected land under Forest Conservation Fund. The Commonwealth to reimburse the State all associated costs	Ongoing commitment has been met
	The State to provide monitoring and management support services to owners of covenanted land	Ongoing commitment has been met
36	The State to deliver management and planning of new reserves on public land	Ongoing commitment has been met
37	The Parties agree that the management of new reserves in north west Tasmania will involve community consultation to maintain access for traditional land uses and to maintain cultural links and uses consistent with conservation values	Ongoing commitment has been met
6	The State to provide resources to implement management plan program	Substantially completed
7	Negotiations in relation to management plans with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to be resolved prior to 30 June 2009	Progressed
8	The State to progress other management planning matters concurrent with Aboriginal negotiations	Progressed
9	The Parties at minimum maintain but also consider increasing reserve funding	Not progressed
10	The State ensures compliance audits of the Tasmanian Reserve Code of Practice and public reporting of results	Progressed
25	The State completes and implements an EMS for all reserves under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i>	Progressed
c. Threatened species and communities (23)		
32	Any new or revised recovery plans will be jointly prepared and funded and implemented cooperatively	Ongoing commitment has been met

33	Multiple-species recovery plans will be developed where appropriate	Ongoing commitment has been met
34	The Commonwealth will continue to consult with the State on the preparation of threat-abatement plans for key threatening processes	Ongoing commitment has been met
35	Commonwealth to adopt State recovery plans where they meet the requirements of Commonwealth legislation	Ongoing commitment has been met
36	National recovery plans and threat-abatement plans will be prepared jointly with other governments where possible	Ongoing commitment has been met
37	The Parties will consult on the priorities for listing threatening species, forest communities and threatening processes, and in the preparation of all recovery plans and threat-abatement plans	Ongoing commitment has been met
70	Actions in agreed recovery plans or threat-abatement plans will be implemented in accordance with timelines in Plan or as soon as possible thereafter	Ongoing commitment has been met
71	Any changes to the Priority Species in Attachment 2 or altered management prescriptions for Priority Species will be in accordance with processes in clause 96	Ongoing commitment has been met
96	The State agrees that any changes to Priority Species, including new or altered management prescriptions, will provide for the maintenance of the species, be scientifically sound, be endorsed by the Threatened Species Scientific Advisory Committee and will also take note of public comment	Ongoing commitment has been met
97	The State agrees to maintain and update databases of management prescriptions and responses to disturbance for threatened species and use these as the basis for management of the species. Updated contents of the databases to be periodically available for public comment	Ongoing commitment has been met
Att. 6.21	Certain communities will be protected on public land outside of reserves	Ongoing commitment has been met
Att 9.5	Appropriate action will be taken by the State if the area of any Forest Community within an IBRA (Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia) region decreases to a level approaching the nominated minimum level for that region. The State will conduct a formal review of the area of Forest Communities within each IBRA region on a five-yearly basis and report on the findings in the 5 yearly review of the Agreement	Ongoing commitment has been met
Att 10.3	Developing and implementing a Threatened Species Protection Strategy	Ongoing commitment has been met

4.4	The Parties complete the preparation of Recovery Plans for all endangered forest-related threatened species. Where species listed under the Tasmanian Act meet the criteria for listing under the Commonwealth Act, both Parties should contribute funding	Implementation substantially progressed but not yet completed
4.7	The State provides sufficient resources for implementation of the Threatened Species Strategy	Ongoing commitment has been met
4.8	The State subjects future substantive changes to management prescriptions for Priority Species to public consultation	Ongoing commitment has been met
5	The Parties agree that Recovery Plans for rare and vulnerable species in Tasmania will continue to be the mechanism for compliance with the Commonwealth <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	Ongoing commitment has been met
12	The Parties prepare and publish Listing Statements or Advice for all forest related threatened species and new species at time of listing	Progressed
13	The Parties make the Listing Statements or Advice publicly available on an appropriate internet site as each is completed.	Ongoing commitment has been met
14	The Parties continue to complete Recovery Plans for forest-related endangered species with priority to those already in preparation	Progressed
15	The Parties to review RFA commitments with a view to removing duplication and ensuring consistency between Commonwealth and State listing processes with up to date lists being made publicly available	Progressed
17	The Parties continue to improve knowledge on threatened species and efficacy of management prescriptions, including explicit monitoring programs	Ongoing commitment has been met
18	The Parties consider the need to amend the RFA to reflect the 2006 amendments to the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	Will be considered as part of the RFA renewal
d. World Heritage (3)		
39	The Parties agree to jointly to participate in the further World Heritage assessment of the relevant Australia – wide themes, specified in Table 1.7 of the World Heritage report, commencing by the 30 June 1998	No longer relevant
40	The Commonwealth agrees that it will give full consideration to potential social and economic consequences of any World Heritage nomination of places in Tasmania and that any such nomination will only occur after the fullest consultation and agreement with the State	Not utilised during the review period

41	World Heritage nomination to be drawn from the Dedicated Reserve System	Not utilised during the review period
42	The Parties agree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that before any World Heritage nomination of any part of the Forest Estate is made, all necessary management arrangements, including joint policy coordination arrangements and a statutory management plan under the relevant Tasmanian legislation, will be in place; and that prior to any World Heritage nomination, all related funding issues will be resolved to the satisfaction of both Parties 	Not utilised during the review period
e. Heritage Identification and Protection (5)		
83	Tasmania will introduce legislation to replace the <i>Aboriginal Relics Act</i> after consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community	Progressed but not yet completed
Att 10.4	Implementing the <i>Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995</i>	Ongoing commitment has been met
Att 10.5	Developing new legislation in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage	Progressed but not yet completed
31	The Parties consider amending the RFA to reflect the changes in the Commonwealth legislation related to the national estate and national heritage lists	Will be considered as part of the RFA renewal
33	The State request the FPA to review and revise the Forest Practices Archaeological Manual in relation to matters other than Aboriginal heritage and make revisions as required to take account of new Tasmanian Aboriginal heritage legislation	Progressed
f. Water, fire and climate change (6)		
Att 10.1	Implementation of the State Policy <i>Setting New Standards for Water Quality</i>	Ongoing commitment has been met
19	The State completes Water Management Plans under the Water Management Act 1999 in accordance with its commitments under the National Water Initiative Implementation Plan	Progressed
20	The State continues to invest in research into the impacts of forestry practices on hydrological cycles in Tasmanian catchments	Ongoing commitment has been met
23	The State ensures Water Management Plans provide a risk based approach to water management	Ongoing commitment has been met
28	The Parties improve the collection and reporting of relevant climate change data to assist understanding of carbon and climate change issues	Ongoing commitment has been met

g. Mining, tourism and apiculture (5)		
79	The Parties recognise that, subject to clauses 80, 81 and 82, mineral exploration and mining can occur in the parts of the CAR reserve system identified in Attachment 6	Ongoing commitment has been met
80	Mineral exploration proposals in CAR reserves to be referred to the Mineral Exploration Working Group	Ongoing commitment has been met
81	All mining activities in CAR reserves will be subject to environmental impact assessment and environmental management conditions	Ongoing commitment has been met
82	In parts of the CAR reserve system with high-quality wilderness value, measures will be taken to minimise the effects of mining exploration and mining activities on wilderness values. Any rehabilitation will aim to restore the site to wilderness condition	Ongoing commitment has been met
7.2	The State continues to work with the apiary industry to resolve the issues on public land for bee keeping and the leatherwood resource and prepares a plan for management of the leatherwood resource in the southern forests	Ongoing commitment has been met. Plan not developed
41	The State to complete the plan for the future of the apiary industry	Progressed
h. Wood resources and industry data (6)		
74	The Parties agree to cooperate in implementing the specified actions in the Employment and Industries Development Strategy (Attachment 12)	Ongoing commitment has been met
5.1	The Parties develop a process to obtain reliable data to inform social and economic indicators for the community and the performance of the 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	Progressed further since 2007 but incomplete
6.1	The State continues to improve transparency in reporting, and continuously improves the methodology for, the sustainable yield reviews of high quality sawlogs from public lands	Ongoing commitment has been met
43	The Parties review the availability and reliability of social and economic data and indicators for inclusion in the next five yearly review	Progressed
34	The State to deliver an integrated program of existing plantation productivity improvement, new plantation establishment and enhanced native forest thinning designed to maintain RFA targets for sustainable sawlog supplies from State Forests	Substantially completed

i. Inter Party information sharing, transparency and public reporting (10)		
72	Public reporting and consultation opportunities provided through the processes outlined in Attachment 11 will continue	Ongoing commitment has been met
73	The State will implement the range of reporting and consultative mechanisms in Attachment 11	Ongoing commitment has been met
Att 11.3	Relevant State agencies to include in their annual reports a report on outcomes of the compliance audits for codes of practice, and the monitoring of forest regeneration success and trends. See also #41	Ongoing commitment has been met
89	Relevant research reports will be made publicly available wherever practicable	Ongoing commitment has been met
90	Commonwealth and Tasmania to provide each other with access to data as per Attachment 14 (The Parties recognise that the implementation and monitoring of this Agreement depends on appropriate mutual access to and accreditation of relevant information owned and held by each of them and have agreed to provide such access and accreditation for the term of this Agreement in accordance with the practices and procedures specified in Attachment 14	Mostly completed prior to 2002 Five Yearly Review. Some ongoing commitments met
31	The State to publicly report the area of public old growth harvested by silviculture technique each year	Ongoing commitment has been met
j. Forest practices (13)		
64	The State agrees to amend its forest management systems to reflect the undertakings in this Agreement, particularly those in Attachment 10	Some completed prior to 2002 and 2007 Five Yearly Reviews. Others progressed and ongoing commitments met
Att 10.6	Further develop and apply flexible silvicultural systems on public land to promote the sustainable production of special timbers	Ongoing commitment has been met
4.1	The State improves the accountability of the Forest Practices System	Ongoing commitment has been met
4.13	The Parties encourage the development of environmental management systems in the private forest sector	Ongoing commitment has been met
4.16	The Forest Practices Board considers giving effect to the smoke management guidelines during the next review of the Forest Practices Code	Progressed. Code review in progress.

Att 10.10	Continue to resource the Forest Practices System and maintain appropriate contributions from industry	Ongoing commitment has been met
Att 10.12	Ensure that Forest Practices Plans specify best-practice reforestation standards and provide for monitoring Where endangered species have been identified on private land, the plan includes appropriate management prescriptions for those species	Ongoing commitment has been met Ongoing commitment has been met
58	The State will continue, with respect to private land, to: (a) ensure that private forest owners comply with the Forest Practices Code for harvesting and regeneration operations; (b) develop adequate mechanisms to protect nature conservation and catchment values; and undertake the initiatives specified in Attachments 9, 10 and 11	Ongoing commitment has been met
58(TCFA)	The State to implement publicly accountable systems for monitoring the impact of residue harvesting for biomass energy plants on biodiversity	Not yet commenced – no proposal
9.1	The Parties support ongoing research and development for sustainability indicators	Ongoing commitment has been met
Att 10.9	Implementing, as a high priority, the mechanisms for improving transparency and independence of the Forest Practices Board	Completed prior to 2002 Five Yearly Review with further measures implemented since 2002
94	The State agrees to publish and make publicly available, its: Annual compliance audits of the implementation of the <i>Forest Practices Act 1985 (Tas.)</i> , Forest Practices Code and its code of reserve management specified in Attachment 10.9	Ongoing commitment has been met
19	The Parties to ensure access to data continues to be provided in accordance with clause 90 and Attachment 14 of the RFA	Ongoing commitment has been met

Table 3: Submissions to the Review

No.	Name	Address
1	Dean Archer, Unlock Tasmania Inc.	Not provided
2	Roger Martin	George Town TAS
3	Bob Gordon, Institute of Foresters of Australia (Tasmanian Division)	Hobart TAS
4	Daryl Quillam, Circular Head Council	Smithton, TAS
5	Philip Milner	Not provided
6	Malcolm Mars	Taroona, TAS
7	John Mc Nab	Circular Head, TAS
8	Andrew Ricketts, Environment Association (TEA) Inc.	Deloraine, TAS
9	George Harris, Huon Resource Development Group Inc.	TAS
10	Peter McGlone, Tasmanian Conservation Trust Inc.	Hobart, TAS
11	Robert Bertram	Not provided
12	Peter Skillern, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association	Launceston, TAS
13	Warrick Jordan, on behalf of The Wilderness Society, Environment Tasmania and the Australian Conservation Foundation	TAS
14	Steve Whiteley, Forestry Tasmania	Hobart, TAS
15	Andrew Denman, Tasmanian Special Timbers Alliance	TAS
16	Jess Feehely, EDO's Australia	Hobart, TAS
17	Amy Robertson	Port Huon, TAS
18	Steve Gall, Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania	Hobart, TAS
19	Gordon Duff, Forest Education Foundation Inc.	Hobart, TAS
20	Mick Stephens, Australian Forest products Association	Canberra, ACT
21	Stacy Gardiner, Australian Forest Contractors Association	Kings Meadows, TAS
22	Peter Lawrence	Not provided
23	Richard Donaghey	Myalla, TAS
24	Maria Riedl (2 Parts)	Mildura, VIC
25	Tania Brown, Circular Head Business Group	Smithton, TAS
26	George Harris	TAS
27	Terry Edwards, Forest Industries Association of Tasmania	Hobart, TAS
28	Rosemary Farrell	Mt Hicks, TAS

Table 4: Summary of key issues/comments raised in written submissions to the Review*

No.	Issues
1	<p>Supports an ongoing RFA.</p> <p>Support for ongoing sustainable forestry in the 'Tarkine' in particular the South Arthur forests and disputing claims much of the area is pristine.</p>
2	<p>Refers to analyses showing native forest logging as a net source of carbon emissions and that if carbon was saleable above particular dollar values, forest carbon sequestration would generate a greater economic return than timber harvesting and processing.</p> <p>New research information not being translated into management practices to protect biodiversity and threatened species.</p> <p>Wet eucalypt forests had declined in extent by 5.6% since 1996 likely to lead to eventual loss of biodiversity.</p> <p>Native forest logging not financially viable and wood from plantations will supplant supplies from native forest particularly if higher proportion of the biomass could be utilised, higher prices were charged for logs and a carbon price was incorporated into forest planning decisions</p>
3.	<p>Support continuation of the RFA framework as a holistic policy framework for ongoing improvement of the management of forests across all tenures.</p> <p>Need for bipartisan support and adherence to the RFA process to achieve its objectives. From 2009-2013 the Australian and Tasmanian Governments abrogated their responsibilities agreed under the RFA framework to NGOs and industry to make forest policy and public land use decisions.</p> <p>The third RFA review should have been undertaken in 2012 as many changes to the CAR reserve system and industry since 2011 are not covered by the review but need to be taken into account in any RFA renewal/extension.</p> <p>Great majority of RFA/TCFA commitments met with resultant continuous improvement of forest management in Tasmania.</p> <p>Commitments to reserve management not fully completed and concern as to whether there is adequate resourcing for reserve management system.</p> <p>Expansion of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area in 2013 did not follow the process set out in the RFA.</p> <p>Forest research and development capacity has declined significantly since 2012 putting at risk studies such as the Warra Long Term Ecological research site</p> <p>Parties need to agree on the timetable for next Sustainable Yield Review, State of the Forests Report and Implementation Report</p> <p>Potential sale of hardwood plantations established and managed with RFA/TCFA funding would have significant negative impact on the future public wood supply and the potential for future industry development.</p>

	<p>Any RFA extension needs provide to longer term certainty whilst maintaining a framework for continuous improvement in forest management (conservation and production forests) based on science.</p> <p>Governments need to provide additional information about the RFA extension process and the opportunity for input by interested parties.</p> <p>RFA renewal/extension should be restricted in scope with fewer commitments and milestones focussed at a high strategic level given the many one off (structural) and system improvement changes required in this RFA have been completed and the cost and effort of reporting on the very large number of commitments in the current RFA has been significant.</p>
4	<p>Support for an ongoing RFA.</p> <p>Resource security required to promote investment certainty and forest industry growth.</p> <p>Supports ongoing production forestry in the South Arthur forests.</p> <p>Lack of active forest management leading to increased numbers of browsing animals that threatens commercial viability of some farms in the Circular Head Municipality.</p> <p>Better bushfire management strategies required particularly for reserve forest.</p> <p>RFA has focused on environmental outcomes with insufficient attention to social and economic factors that with loss of forestry activity (and lack of replacement with other economic activity) has led to a decline in the local economy.</p>
5.	<p>There is a lack of independent review and oversight of logging plans approved by the Forest Practices Authority.</p> <p>There is no apparent public accountability by the Forest Practices Authority in the decisions it makes, particularly in relation to the approval of logging plans and approvals for land clearance for agricultural purposes.</p> <p>Short comings within the Forest Practices Code and the poor application of the existing code by the Forest Practices Authority in relation to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate consideration, protection and conservation of ecological values. - Poor adherence to and compliance with the Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act 1995, the Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002 in relation to listed threatened vegetation communities and the Commonwealth Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 in relation to threatened species and threatened fauna habitat. - Inadequate consideration of impacts and potential impacts on adjoining properties when approving logging plans. - Inadequate consideration of the potential impacts on currently non-threatened flora and fauna. <p>Poor forest practices in ecological terms which appear to be entrenched in the industry such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clear-felling of native forests. - non-retention and induced loss of habitat trees.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inappropriate regeneration burns. - wasteful practices within logging coupes. <p>The accuracy of the data (specifically the mapping of vegetation and the area of native forest) within the State of the Forests Tasmania 2012 report is questionable.</p> <p>The inadequate management of special timber species over many years and the proposed logging of such timbers from reserved lands.</p> <p>A review of plantation forests is needed (with potential reconversion to native forest in some areas).</p>
6	<p>The RFA fails to provide adequate protection for threatened species and biodiversity under the provisions of the EPBC Act.</p> <p>There is insufficient evidence of improvements to the independence of and transparency of compliance monitoring of forestry operations as promised by the Commonwealth Government in response to the review of the EPBC Act (2008 - 2009, Government response 2011).</p> <p>Habitat of threatened species continues to be logged against the advice of the State's own experts (2014).</p> <p>Current Commonwealth and State Governments colluded in an attempt to delist an area of the recently proclaimed extension to the TWWHA (2014).</p> <p>The State Government is proposing to open parts of the TWWHA to logging under a new draft management plan (2015).</p> <p>The RFA has failed to provide surety for the forest industry and Forestry Tasmania has failed to meet the benchmarks for FSC certification (2015).</p> <p>The PNFE policy has been watered down without public consultation allowing broad scale clearing and conversion of native forests on private land (2014).</p> <p>The Parties, following the Wielangta Case, amended the RFA without public consultation in February 2007.</p> <p>The recommendations of the biodiversity protection provisions of the Forest Practices Code have not been implemented in full and legislated wood supply volumes take precedence over biodiversity protection.</p> <p>Sustainable yield should be independently assessed prior to setting legislated volumes and audited after major wild fire events.</p> <p>New State Government fuel reduction policy has hectare-based targets rather than more strategically targeting the risk of bushfires in populated areas. Burning in wilderness areas such as the Tarkine not scientifically justified (2014-15).</p> <p>Impact of fuel reduction burning on public and private land should be assessed under the national environmental laws applicable to logging operations.</p> <p>The State Government has stopped the Pesticide Water Monitoring Program (2014).</p> <p>The State Government has overturned a ban on the use of 1080 despite the RFA banning its use in State Forests and an RFA funded alternative control R&D program (2014).</p>

7	<p>The change in the PNFE target from 80% to 95% of forest cover retention in the TCFA in 2005 was arbitrary and coercive of private landholders as it restricts economic development through preventing conversion of high quality land to productive and higher margin agricultural uses.</p> <p>Need to consider a new system for assessing forest conversion where new end use is compared to existing land use prioritising economic and social development given the large proportion of Tasmania already reserved to protect ecosystems and endangered species.</p>
8	<p>Third review of the RFA is restricted in its terms of reference and timeframe given it is three years late.</p> <p>Current RFA has failed and should not be continued, as it is not in the public interest. Need a new or different RFA following a new comprehensive regional assessment that allows for the inclusion of all stakeholders in a transparent development process.</p> <p>Key deficiencies in the RFA are – insufficient control over clearing of private land or an adequate ongoing mechanism for compensating private forest conservation; weak protection of threatened species and threatened vegetation communities; allows continued expansion of plantations; forest practices system inadequate and in need of reform; reservation has predominately had a wilderness based focus to the exclusion of other values such as scenic or cultural landscapes; does not provide for legislated reform of forestry to provide for its sustainability</p> <p>Reform all State legislation where forestry is assisted/exempted/favoured and introduce third party appeal rights for forest practice plans. Tasmania needs a new forestry policy.</p> <p>Forests should be recognised as carbon sinks and as a potential source of income via carbon credit trading that could outweigh any timber value as well as for other ecosystem services particularly water and biodiversity.</p> <p>Biophysical naturalness mapping of forests needs to be considered as part of a new CRA using the original RFA mapping as a baseline and measure of the impact of climate change.</p> <p>Enact land clearance legislation (for public and private land) incorporating the PNFE policy.</p> <p>The Commonwealth should fund a new private forest conservation program.</p> <p>Revise the State Threatened Species Protection Act 1950 to provide greater protection for threatened species and critical habitat for threatened species on public and private land. Increase funding for the DPIPWE Threatened Species Unit for monitoring and research.</p> <p>Reduce harvesting in native forests by ending export wood chipping and prevent RET subsidised use of native forest residues for energy generation.</p> <p>Opposed to sale of Forestry Tasmania’s hardwood plantations developed with RFA/TCFA Funding (2015)</p> <p>The minimum sawlog quota system should be abolished.</p> <p>Employment in forestry has declined over the last three decades but particularly since 2008 and is now a small contributor to the Tasmanian workforce.</p>

	<p>Abolish or reform the FPA (24 suggestions).</p> <p>Complete the review of the FPC including enforcement provisions, appeal rights and incorporation of the good neighbour charter.</p> <p>Introduce more stringent controls on the use of chemicals in forestry operations, particularly aerial application.</p> <p>Forestry operations should be changed from a permitted (as of right) to discretionary use in relevant planning schemes.</p> <p>More stringent controls be introduced for log trucks and road usage for safety and minimisation of road damage.</p> <p>Further steps need to be implemented to protect water quality and quantity particularly protection of catchment headwaters and limitations on step country logging.</p> <p>Forestry Tasmania should be abolished or restructured to ensure and economic return to the State.</p> <p>Reservation of public forest should be expanded beyond that included in the TFA to include areas of RFA mapping of critical (or key) habitat of threatened fauna. Forest deferred for 6 years under the Forests Act 2014 should be transferred to conservation (2014).</p> <p>All secure reserves should be separate tenure, mapped at appropriate scale and signposted appropriately. Mining, shooting of wildlife and selective logging should be prohibited in reserves. Informal RFA reserves should be converted to formal reserves.</p> <p>The Gunn’s pulp mill permit be quashed and the Pulp Mill Assessment Act be rescinded.</p> <p>Plantations –MIS for forestry should be terminated; any future plantations should be restricted to non-contentious locations and agricultural land be protected from plantation development, inappropriately sited or non-commercial plantations be rehabilitated to native forest or farmland.</p> <p>Forestry fire management inadequate as many plantations lack adequate or maintained firebreaks.</p> <p>Australia needs a new national forest policy statement (NFPS) to reflect new knowledge, changed industry circumstances and potential climate change.</p> <p>Does not support AFS or FSC certification as they are seen to be a marketing device for loggers. Certification should not be endorsed in place of legislative requirements.</p> <p>Supports a Royal Commission into forestry in Tasmania.</p> <p>Does not support the TFA in terms of the participation and process for reaching the agreement and the outcomes in terms of conservation – too much focus on wilderness as opposed to broader landscape protection.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>This RFA review is a little like closing the door after the horse has bolted as the TFA (2012) effectively overrode the RFA.</p> <p>Almost half the State’s native forests excluded from timber harvesting a figure that exceeds or meets international benchmarks.</p>

	<p>The definition of high conservation forest is contestable and most (depending of the definition) is already reserved. A definition in line with JANIS criteria is required.</p> <p>Plantation resource does not necessarily provide a direct substitute for native forest timber even if the former has been intensively managed.</p> <p>The Tasmanian forest practices systems exceed the requirements of international forest certification schemes.</p> <p>Declining revenue from forestry compromises fire fighting capability and forest access for fire fighting, tourism and other industries and management and infrastructure costs will increasing fall to the State.</p> <p>Require resource security for industry development.</p> <p>Increased access to special timbers in accordance with the Special Timbers Strategy (2010).</p>
10	<p>Note the review report is three years late and will be more interested in the fourth review report as decisions since 2012 have changed circumstances.</p> <p>RFA renewal should include an assessment of RFA objectives. A new CRA should be undertaken.</p> <p>The RFA review (or renewal agreement?) should be reviewed by the Tasmanian Planning Commission or another independent statutory body</p>
11	<p>Quality of data to support several Montréal Process Criteria and Indicators is deficient.</p> <p>Productivity of plantations established on native forest sites not always as predicted.</p> <p>Potential long-term decline in forest carbon sink capacity due to climate change.</p> <p>Forestry operations near conservation covenanted private forests might compromise conservation values.</p>
12	<p>RFA should be converted to a perpetual, rolling 20-year agreement to provide investment confidence for industry.</p> <p>Re-establish the Good Neighbour Charter including between public and private landowners.</p> <p>Review of the PNFE policy in 2015 must include consultation with industry (private landowners).</p> <p>Applications for compensation by private landowners under the Nature Conservation Act 2002 need to be resolved within a specified timeframe and be more as of right.</p>
13	<p>The RFA has not protected forest environmental values or delivered a sustainable industry.</p> <p>The process to review, replace or renew the RFA should involve a review of its success in meeting the objectives of the TCFA, the NFPS and the EPBC Act.</p> <p>A new CRA should be undertaken to take account of new scientific knowledge, changed industry circumstances and the performance of reserved areas in protecting threatened species.</p>

	<p>Forest operations and management should no longer be exempt from the requirements of the EPBC Act (clause s.38 of the Act should be removed or replaced with legislated powers to protected MNES in RFA regions).</p> <p>Future Potential Production Zone Land should be converted to formal reserves under the Nature Conservation Act 2015.</p> <p>The duty of care provisions of the FPC should be removed and compensation made available to private land holders.</p> <p>The FPC should be reformed – the outputs of management tools supporting the FPC should be made mandatory; full implementation of landscape scale planning, third party appeal rights and improved capacity for adoption of new knowledge.</p> <p>The monitoring of the RFA or its replacement should have more focus on measuring outcomes as opposed to compliance.</p> <p>A research program should be undertaken to address gaps in monitoring the RFA or its replacement and research and development in value adding.</p> <p>The potential impacts of climate change and natural disturbance should be accounted for in revised Tasmanian forest management framework.</p> <p>The value of forests as sinks and sources of carbon should be addressed in a revised Tasmanian forest management framework.</p> <p>The Commonwealth should establish policy to support investment in fit for purpose plantation sawlog products, value adding and innovation.</p> <p>The Tasmanian Aboriginal community should have a greater role in the stewardship of state forest and reserved areas (hand backs or co-management) along with resources and training.</p>
14	<p>Supports continuation of the RFA as an effective forest management system with dual Tasmanian and Commonwealth Government support.</p>
15	<p>Lack of special timber resource security and significant reduction in special species timber management units (STMUs) through the TCFA and TFA with consequent reduction of supply and price escalation.</p> <p>New special timber management plan being developed under the Forestry Act 2014 should be integrated into a new or replacement RFA.</p> <p>Any future World Heritage extensions should be undertaken under the RFA World Heritage clauses.</p> <p>Future harvesting of special timbers should be confined to selective or partial harvesting (including in selected reserves) with minimisation of immature tree harvesting.</p> <p>Need to calculate the sustained yield of non-blackwood species.</p> <p>There has been poor implementation of some special timber relevant initiatives of Attachment 12 of the RFA particularly the Wooden Boat Board Bank. The latter properly administered is a valuable sector initiative that should be taken forward in any new or replacement RFA.</p>

<p>16</p>	<p>The third year review comes three years late but should not ignore important recent developments.</p> <p>Exclusion of RFA forestry activities from the operation of the EPBC Act has reduced the protection afforded to biodiversity, particularly threatened species and ecological communities.</p> <p>Tasmanian policies and legislation governing forestry activities do not achieve equivalent standards of protection to those under the EPBC Act.</p> <p>Accreditation of Tasmanian forest practices system under the EPBC Act compromises the protection of MNES and threatens Australia's ability to comply with international obligations.</p> <p>The Commonwealth does not have monitoring, compliance and enforcement mechanisms in place to determine if the RFA is achieving the desired outcome or to take action where outcomes are not delivered.</p> <p>The RFA contains no explicit and mandatory mechanisms requiring the application of the precautionary principle to forestry activity or otherwise respond to new information.</p> <p>The RFA does not adequately deal with potential impacts of climate change on forest carbon stocks, sustained yield, natural disturbance or invasive pests.</p> <p>Threatened species prescriptions lack targets and are not adequately monitored to determine if the prescriptions met their intended outcomes.</p> <p>Clearing of threatened vegetation communities may occur as a consequence of a potential regulatory gap in the FP Act</p> <p>Special species harvesting may occur in within the TWWHA (2014).</p> <p>Reporting and monitoring of vegetation clearance is not comprehensive and fragmented amongst different bodies.</p> <p>On ground compliance and lack of enforcement remains a fundamental weakness of the Tasmanian forest practices system.</p> <p>Access to FFPs is restricted and difficult and third party appeal rights should be introduced.</p> <p>ESFM and protection of MNES best achieved by the removal of the "RFA exemption" under the EPBC Act.</p> <p>Future RFA's should be declared under the strategic assessment provisions of the EPBC Act subject to reassessment every five years with capacity to consider new issues.</p> <p>All the reserve estate including the FPPZL land should be included in the CAR reserve system in reserve classes in which logging is prohibited.</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>The level of reservation is creeping well above that intended in the RFA to achieve environmental, economic and social balance.</p> <p>Should be a mechanism to allow land swaps between reserves and non-reserved forest to maintain the balance.</p> <p>There needs to be more regular community consultation and engagement around RFA outcomes.</p> <p>RFA rules and decisions should not be influenced by forest certification schemes.</p>

<p>18</p>	<p>The substantive intent of the RFA in regard to the protection of aboriginal heritage values has not been met.</p> <p>The new FPA Manual- A guide for managing Aboriginal cultural heritage in wood production forests is supported by the Aboriginal Heritage Council and should be incorporated or recognized in a new or replacement RFA.</p> <p>Legislative reform to replace the Aboriginal Relics Act 1975 remains a requirement to provide a stronger and more comprehensive framework for the protection of Aboriginal heritage in Tasmania.</p> <p>The Aboriginal community seeks more formal engagement in preparation of management plans for parks and reserves and supports Government policy of dual names, Aboriginal tourist ventures and joint land management.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>The Forest Education Foundation has contributed to school education programs providing a balanced perspective of on forests and forest management across all tenures.</p> <p>The Foundations viability has been affected by the downsizing of the forest industry and it seeks new opportunities and funding to maintain its programs.</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>The RFA is the right mechanism to balance the competing demands on Tasmania’s forests into the future.</p> <p>Supports a 20-year rolling life for the RFA based on a five-year review model of outcomes across the triple bottom line criteria and across all land tenures.</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>Support the RFA mechanism and 20- year rolling life subject to 5-year reviews.</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>Forestry Tasmania should be subject to the EPBC Act.</p> <p>Insufficient protection for Tasmanian devil habitat.</p>
<p>23</p>	<p>Forestry operations should not be exempt from the EPBC Act.</p> <p>It should be illegal for Forestry Tasmania to destroy habitat of threatened species and communities and these habitats should be protected in perpetuity.</p>
<p>24</p>	<p>End native forest logging – particularly old growth to preserve habitat, store carbon and benefit other industries such as tourism.</p> <p>Supports implementation of the TFA and additional reserves (2015).</p> <p>Against attempt to delist part of the extended TWWHA (2015).</p> <p>Burning of native forest waste for energy should be disallowed – the definition of renewable energy should be included in the legislation not in the regulations.</p>
<p>25</p>	<p>Supports continuation of the RFA and logging in the Tarkine.</p> <p>Reduction in the forest industry has negatively impacted the Circular Head economy.</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>RFA has lacked durability.</p> <p>Supply of special timbers reduced by 80% for species other than Blackwood and threatens survival or development of high value downstream value</p>

	adding sector including craft and furniture, boat building and emerging musical instrument making sector.
27	<p>Support for original concept /objectives of the RFA and extension /renewal on 20 -year rolling basis.</p> <p>Original RFA objective to balance triple bottom line objectives not achieved with environmental considerations taking primacy.</p> <p>RFA overridden through political intervention and has not provided resource security and investor confidence.</p> <p>For future RFA critical issue for the processing sector is reliable supply of high quality resource from a combination of public and private forests for investor confidence and processing innovation.</p> <p>Future RFA must achieve a triple bottom line balance with binding commitments on the Parties that are not subject to arbitrary alteration.</p> <p>Undertake a new social and economic analysis to support the development of the RFA renewal/extension.</p> <p>Support by the Parties for ongoing R&D for productivity improvements in regrowth stands and processing of plantation grown wood.</p>
28	<p>There should be more intensive management of existing plantation on public land.</p> <p>The legislated sustainable saw log harvest should be reduced and Forestry Tasmania staff and resources reallocated to intensively manage the current plantation resource on public land.</p>

*Major policy decisions since the end of the review period are noted by year e.g. (2014)

Table 5: Summary of issues/comments raised in submissions by major category*

RFA – Review Process/ Overall Outcomes
Great majority of RFA/TCFA commitments met with resultant continuous improvement of forest management in Tasmania.
The third RFA review should have been undertaken in 2012 as many changes to the CAR reserve system and industry since 2011 are not covered by the review but need to be taken into account in any RFA renegotiation/extension.
The Parties, following the Wielangta Case, amended the RFA without public consultation in February 2007.
RFA has focused on environmental outcomes with insufficient attention to social and economic factors that with loss of forestry activity (and lack of replacement with other economic activity) has led to a decline in local economies.
Third review of the RFA is restricted in its terms of reference and review period timeframe given it is three years late.
This RFA review is a little like closing the door after the horse has bolted as the TFA (2012) effectively overrode the RFA.
The third year review comes three years late but should not ignore important recent developments.
Note the review report is three years late and will be more interested in the fourth review report as decisions since 2012 have changed circumstances.
The RFA has not protected forest environmental values or delivered a sustainable industry.
The Commonwealth does not have monitoring, compliance and enforcement mechanisms in place to determine if the RFA is achieving the desired outcome or to take action where outcomes are not delivered.
The RFA contains no explicit and mandatory mechanisms requiring the application of the precautionary principle to forestry activity or otherwise respond to new information.
The RFA does not adequately deal with potential impacts of climate change on forest carbon stocks, sustained yield, natural disturbance or invasive pests.
Supports continuation of the RFA as an effective forest management system with dual Tasmanian and Commonwealth Government support.
Key deficiencies in the RFA are – insufficient control over clearing of private land or an adequate ongoing mechanism for compensating private forest conservation; weak protection of threatened species and threatened vegetation communities; allows continued expansion of plantations; forest practices system inadequate and in need of reform; reservation has predominately had a wilderness based focus to the exclusion off other values such as scenic or cultural landscapes; does not provide for legislated reform of forestry to provide for its sustainability.
Australia needs a new NFPS to reflect new knowledge, changed industry circumstances and potential climate change.
The RFA has failed to provide surety for the forest industry and Forestry Tasmania has failed to meet the benchmarks for FSC certification (2015).

There needs to be more regular community consultation and engagement around RFA outcomes.
The RFA fails to provide adequate protection for threatened species and biodiversity under the provisions of the EPBC Act.
Supports continuation of the RFA and logging in the Tarkine.
Reduction in the forest industry has negatively impacted the Circular Head economy.
RFA has lacked durability.
Original RFA objective to balance triple bottom line objectives not achieved with environmental considerations taking primacy.
RFA overridden through political intervention and has not provided resource security and investor confidence.
Employment in forestry has declined over the last three decades but particularly since 2008 and is now a small contributor to the Tasmanian workforce.
RFA – Renewal /Extension /Replacement
Support continuation of the RFA framework as a holistic policy framework for ongoing improvement of the management of forests across all tenures and resource security (number of submissions).
Bipartisan support and adherence to the RFA process required for the agreement to achieve its objectives. From 2009-2013 the Australian and Tasmanian Governments abrogated their responsibilities agreed under the RFA framework to NGOs and industry to make forest policy and public land use decisions.
Any RFA extension needs provide to longer term certainty whilst maintaining a framework for continuous improvement in forest management (conservation and production forests) based on science.
Governments need to provide additional information about the RFA extension process and the opportunity for input by interested parties.
Any RFA extension should be restricted in scope with fewer commitments and milestones focused at a high strategic level given the many one off (structural) and system improvement changes required in this RFA have been completed and the cost and effort of reporting on the very large number of commitments in the current RFA has been significant.
Parties need to agree on timetable for next Sustainable Yield Review, State of the Forests Report and Implementation Report (as part of any extension agreement).
Current RFA has failed and should not be continued, as it is not in the public interest. Need a new or different RFA following a new comprehensive regional assessment that allows for the inclusion of all stakeholders in a transparent development process.
RFA renewal should include an assessment of RFA objectives. A new CRA should be undertaken.
The RFA review (or renewal/extension?) should be reviewed by the Tasmanian Planning Commission or another independent statutory body
RFA should be converted to a perpetual, rolling 20-year agreement to provide investment confidence for industry.

Future RFA's should be declared under the strategic assessment provisions of the EPBC Act subject to reassessment every five years with capacity to consider new issues.
There needs to be more regular community consultation and engagement around RFA outcomes.
RFA rules and decisions should not be influenced by forest certification schemes.
The potential impacts of climate change and natural disturbance should be accounted for in revised Tasmanian forest management framework.
The value of forests as sinks and sources of carbon should be addressed in a revised Tasmanian forest management framework.
The monitoring of the RFA or its replacement should have more focus on measuring outcomes as opposed to compliance.
The RFA is the right mechanism to balance the competing demands on Tasmania's forests into the future.
Supports a 20-year rolling life for the RFA based on a five-year review model of outcomes across the triple bottom line criteria and across all land tenures.
Support the RFA mechanism and 20- year rolling life subject to 5-year reviews.
Forest operations and management should no longer be exempt from the requirements of the EPBC Act (clause s.38 of the Act should be removed or replaced with legislated powers to protected MNES in RFA regions).
Forests should be recognised as carbon sinks and as a potential source of income via carbon credit trading that could outweigh any timber value as well as for other ecosystem services particularly water and biodiversity.
Biophysical naturalness mapping of forests needs to be considered as part of a new CRA using the original RFA mapping as a baseline and measure of the impact of climate change.
The process to review, renew or replace the RFA should involve a review of its success in meeting the objectives of the RFA, the NFPS and the EPBC Act.
Support for original concept /objectives of the RFA and extension /renewal on 20 -year rolling basis.
For future RFA critical issue for the processing sector is reliable supply of high quality resource from a combination of public and private forests for investor confidence and processing innovation.
Future RFA must achieve a triple bottom line balance with binding commitments on the Parties that are not subject to arbitrary alteration.
Undertake a new social and economic analysis to support the development of the RFA renewal/extension.
Require a branding and marketing strategy for wood produced from Tasmania's sustainably managed forests.
Research/ Education
Forest research and development capacity has declined significantly since 2012 putting at risk studies such as the Warra Long Term Ecological Research Site.
A research program should be undertaken to address gaps in the monitoring of the RFA or its replacement and expand research and development in value adding.

The Forest Education Foundation has contributed to school education programs providing a balanced perspective of on forests and forest management across all tenures.
The Foundations viability has been affected by the downsizing of the forest industry and it seeks new opportunities and funding to maintain its programs.
Support by the Parties for ongoing R&D for productivity improvements in regrowth stands and processing of plantation grown wood.
Forest Practices
There is a lack of independent review and oversight of logging plans approved by the Forest Practices Authority.
There is no apparent public accountability by the Forest Practices Authority in the decisions it makes, particularly in relation to the approval of logging plans and approvals for land clearance for agricultural purposes.
Short comings within the Forest Practices Code and the poor application of the existing code by the Forest Practices Authority in relation to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Inadequate consideration, protection and conservation of ecological values. · Poor adherence to and compliance with the Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act 1995, the Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002 in relation to listed threatened vegetation communities and the Commonwealth Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 in relation to threatened species and threatened fauna habitat. · Inadequate consideration of impacts and potential impacts on adjoining properties when approving logging plans. · Inadequate consideration of the potential impacts on currently non-threatened flora and fauna.
Poor forest practices in ecological terms which appear to be entrenched in the industry such as; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · clear-felling of native forests. · non-retention and induced loss of habitat trees. · inappropriate regeneration burns. · wasteful practices within logging coupes.
The accuracy of the data (specifically the mapping of vegetation and the area of native forest) within the State of the Forests Tasmania 2012 report is questionable.
There is insufficient evidence of improvements to the independence of and transparency of compliance monitoring of forestry operations as promised by the Commonwealth Government in response to the review of the EPBC Act (2008- 2009, Government response 2011).
Abolish or reform the FPA.
Complete the review of the FPC including enforcement provisions, appeal rights and incorporation of the Good Neighbour Charter.
The Tasmanian forest practices systems exceeds the requirements of international forest certification schemes.
The duty of care provisions of the FPC should be removed and compensation made available to private landholders.
The FPC should be reformed – the outputs of management tools supporting the FPC should be made mandatory; full implementation of landscape scale planning, third party appeal rights and improved capacity for adoption of new knowledge.

Re-establish the Good Neighbour Charter including between public and private landowners.
Reporting and monitoring of vegetation clearance is not comprehensive and fragmented amongst different bodies.
On ground compliance and lack of enforcement remains a fundamental weakness of the Tasmanian forest practices system.
Access to FPPs is restricted and difficult and third party appeal rights should be introduced.
The recommendations of the biodiversity provisions of the Forest practices Code have not been implemented in full and legislated wood supply volumes take precedence over biodiversity protection.
Clearing of threatened vegetation communities may occur as consequence of a potential regulatory gap in the FP Act.
Special Species Timbers
The inadequate management of special timber species over many years and the proposed logging of such timbers from reserved lands.
Lack of special timber resource security and significant reduction in STMUs through the TCFA and TFA with consequent reduction of supplies and price escalation.
New special timber management plan being developed under the Forestry Act 2014 should be integrated into a new or replacement RFA.
Future harvesting of special timbers should be confined to selective or partial harvesting (including in selected reserves) with minimisation of immature tree harvesting.
Need to calculate the sustained yield of non-Blackwood species.
There has been poor implementation of some special timber relevant initiatives of Attachment 12 of the RFA particularly the Wooden Boat Board Bank. The latter properly administered is a valuable sector initiative that should be taken forward in any new or replacement RFA.
Increased access to special timbers in accordance with the Special Timbers Strategy (2010).
Special species harvesting may occur in FPPZL land within the TWWHA (2014).
Supply of special timbers reduced by 80% for species other than Blackwood and threatens survival or development of high value downstream value adding sector including craft and furniture, boat building and emerging musical instrument making sector.
Sustainable Sawlog Yield
Sustainable yield should be independently assessed prior to setting legislated volumes and audited after major wild fire events.
The minimum saw log quota system should be abolished.
Water
The State Government has stopped the Pesticide Water Monitoring Program (2014).
Further steps need to be implemented to protect water quality and particularly protection of catchment headwaters and limitations on steep country logging.

Reserves/Reserve Management
Commitments to reserve management not fully completed and concern as to whether there is adequate resourcing for reserve management.
Support for ongoing sustainable forestry in the 'Tarkine' in particular the South Arthur forests and disputing claims much of the area is pristine.
Reservation of public forest should be expanded beyond that included in the TFA to include areas of RFA mapping of critical (or key) habitat of threatened fauna. Forest deferred for 6 years under Forests Act 2014 should be transferred to conservation.
All secure reserves should be separate tenure, mapped at appropriate scale and signposted appropriately. Mining, shooting of wildlife and selective logging should be prohibited in reserves. Informal RFA reserves should be converted to formal reserves.
Almost half the State's native forests excluded from timber harvesting a figure that exceeds or meets international benchmarks.
The definition of high conservation forest is contestable and most (depending of the definition) is already reserved. A definition in line with JANIS criteria is required.
All the reserve estate including the FFPL land should be included in the CAR reserve system in reserve classes in which logging is prohibited.
The level of reservation is creeping well above that intended in the RFA to achieve environmental, economic and social balance.
Should be a mechanism to allow land swaps between reserves and non reserved forest to maintain the balance.
Future Potential Production Zone Land should be converted to formal reserves under the Nature Conservation Act. (2015).
Forestry operations near conservation covenanted private forests might compromise conservation values.
Supports implementation of the TFA and additional reserves (2015).
Against attempt to delist part of the extended TWWHA (2015).
Climate Change /Fire /Water
Refers to analyses showing native forest logging as a net source of carbon emissions and that if carbon was saleable above particular dollar values, forest carbon sequestration would generate a greater economic return than timber harvesting and processing.
Better bushfire management strategies required particularly for reserve forest.
Impact of fuel reduction burning on public and private land should be assessed under the national environmental laws applicable to logging operations.
New State Government fuel reduction policy has hectare-based targets rather than more strategically targeting the risk of bushfires in populated areas. Burning in wilderness areas such as the Tarkine not scientifically justified (2014-15).
Further steps need to be implemented to protect water quality and quantity particularly protection of catchment headwaters and limitations on steep country logging.
Forestry fire management inadequate as many plantations lack adequate or maintained firebreaks.

Potential long-term decline in forest carbon sink capacity due to climate change.
Declining revenue from forestry compromises fire fighting capability and forest access for fire fighting, tourism and other industries and management and infrastructure costs will increasingly fall to the State.
Browsing/Chemical Usage
Lack of active forest management leading to increased numbers of browsing animals that threatens commercial viability of some farms in the Circular Head Municipality.
The State Government has overturned a ban on the use of 1080 despite the RFA banning its use in State Forests and an RFA funded alternative control R&D program (2014).
Introduce more stringent controls on the use of chemicals in forestry operations, particularly aerial application.
Plantations
Opposed to sale of Forestry Tasmania's hardwood plantations developed with RFA/TCFA Funding (2015).
Plantations –MIS for forestry should be terminated; any future plantations should be restricted to non-contentious locations and agricultural land be protected from plantation development, inappropriately sited or non-commercial plantations be rehabilitated to native forest or farmland.
Productivity of plantations established on native forest sites not always as predicted..
Plantation resource does not necessarily provide a direct substitute for native forest timber even if the former has been intensively managed.
Potential sale of hardwood plantations established and managed with RFA/TCFA funding would have significant negative impact on the future public wood supply and the potential for future industry development (2015).
A review of plantation forests is needed (with potential reconversion to native forest in some areas).
The Commonwealth should establish policy to support investment in fit for purpose plantation saw log products, value adding and innovation.
Native forest logging not financially viable and wood from plantations will supplant supplies from native forest particularly if higher proportion of biomass could be utilized, higher prices charged for logs and a carbon price incorporated into forest planning decisions.
Certification
Do not support AFS or FSC certification as they are marketing device for loggers. Certification should not be endorsed in place of legislative requirements.
Monitoring /Data
Quality of data to support several Montréal process Criteria and Indicators is deficient.
Threatened Species
Revise the State <i>Threatened Species Protection Act (1995)</i> to provide greater protection for threatened species and critical habitat for threatened species on public and private land. Increase funding for the DPIPW Threatened Species Unit for monitoring and research.
Threatened species prescriptions lack targets and are not adequately monitored to determine if the prescriptions met their intended outcomes.

Clearing of threatened vegetation communities may occur as a consequence of a potential regulatory gap in the Forest Practices Act.
ESFM and protection of MNES best achieved by the removal of the “RFA exemption” under the EPBC Act.
Exclusion of RFA forestry activities from the operation of the EPBC Act has reduced the protection afforded to biodiversity, particularly threatened species and ecological communities.
Tasmanian policies and legislation governing forestry activities do not achieve equivalent standards of protection to those under the EPBC Act.
Accreditation of Tasmanian forest practices system under the EPBC Act compromises the protection of MNES and threatens Australia’s ability to comply with international obligations.
Forestry operations near conservation covenanted private forests might compromise conservation values.
New research information not being translated into management practices to protect biodiversity and threatened species.
Forestry Tasmania should be subject to the EPBC Act.
Insufficient protection for Tasmanian devil habitat.
Forestry operations should not be exempt from the EPBC Act.
It should be illegal for Forestry Tasmania to destroy habitat of threatened species and communities and these habitats should be protected in perpetuity.
End native forest logging – particularly old growth to preserve habitat, store carbon and benefit other industries such as tourism.
Aboriginal Heritage and Land Management
The Tasmanian Aboriginal community should have a greater role in the stewardship of state forest and reserved areas (hand backs or co-management) along with resources and training.
The substantive intent of the RFA in regard to the protection of Aboriginal heritage values has not been met.
The Aboriginal community seeks more formal engagement in preparation of management plans for parks and reserves and supports Government policy of dual names, Aboriginal tourist ventures and joint land management.
The new FPA Manual- A guide for managing Aboriginal cultural heritage in wood production is supported by the Aboriginal Heritage Council and should be incorporated or recognized in a new or replacement RFA.
Legislative reform to replace the Aboriginal Relics Act 1975 remains a requirement to provide a stronger and more comprehensive framework for the protection of Aboriginal heritage in Tasmania
Permanent Native Forest Estate /Private forests
The PNFE policy has been watered down without public consultation allowing broad scale clearing and conversion of native forests on private land (2014).
The change in the PNFE target from 80% to 95 % of forest cover retention in the TCFA in 2005 was arbitrary and coercive of private landholders as it restricts economic

development through preventing conversion of high quality land to productive and higher margin agricultural uses.
Enact land clearance legislation (for public and private land) incorporating the PNFE policy.
Need to consider a new system for assessing forest conversion where new end use is compared to existing land use prioritising economic and social development given the large proportion of Tasmania already reserved to protect ecosystems and endangered species.
The Commonwealth should fund a new private forest conservation program.
Review of the PNFE in 2015 must include consultation with industry (private landowners).
Applications for compensation by private landowners under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i> need to be resolved within a specified timeframe and compensation needs to be more as of right.
Wet eucalypt forests had declined in extent by 5.6% since 1996 and likely to lead to eventual loss of biodiversity.
World Heritage
Expansion of TWWHA in 2013 did not follow the process set out in the RFA.
Current Commonwealth and State Governments colluded in an attempt to delist an area of the recently proclaimed extension to the TWWHA (2014).
The State Government is proposing to open parts of the TWWHA to logging under a new draft management plan (2015).
Any future World Heritage extensions should be undertaken under the RFA World Heritage clauses.
Other Policy/ Planning/ Regulatory Issues
Reform all State legislation where forestry is assisted/exempted/favoured and introduce third party appeal rights for FPPs.
Reduce harvesting in native forests by ending export wood chipping and prevent RET subsidised use of native forest residues for energy generation.
Forestry operations should be changed from a permitted (as of right) to discretionary use in relevant planning schemes and forestry operations included in the Land Use Planning Approvals Act 1993.
Forestry Tasmania should be abolished or restructured to ensure an economic return to the State.
Supports a Royal Commission into forestry in Tasmania.
Does not support the TFA in terms of the participation and process for reaching the agreement and the outcomes in terms of conservation – too much focus on wilderness as opposed to broader landscape protection.
The pulp mill permit be quashed and the Pulp Mill Assessment Act be rescinded.
Tasmania needs a new forestry policy.
More stringent controls be introduced for log trucks and road usage for safety and minimisation of road damage.

Burning of native forest waste for energy should be disallowed – the definition of renewable energy should be included in the legislation not the regulations (2015).

The NFPS should be revised.

* There was some consolidation from Table 3 to reduce duplication of comments.

Attachment 1: Terms of Reference for the Third Five Yearly Review of Progress with Implementation of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments (the Parties) signed the Tasmanian RFA on 8 November 1997.

The Tasmanian RFA establishes the framework for the management of forests within the Tasmanian RFA region. The duration of the Tasmanian RFA is 20 years.

As provided under clause 8 of the Tasmanian RFA, it is the intent of the Parties to agree to an extension process for the agreement as part of the third five-yearly review.

An important element of the Tasmanian RFA is the requirement to review the performance of the Tasmanian RFA. A review is an assessment of progress made against the milestones and commitments specified in the Tasmanian RFA.

Clause 45 of the Tasmanian RFA requires that:

A review of the performance of this Agreement is to be undertaken during the last year of each five-year period to assess the progress of the Agreement against its specified milestones and commitments:

The review is to be conducted:

- (i) By a person or body jointly appointed by the Parties
- (ii) In accordance with agreed priorities, procedures and funding arrangements.

The review will:

- (iii) Invite and take account of public comments
- (iv) Use and take account of the Sustainability Indicators including trends
- (v) Be sufficient to satisfy the requirements for a State of the Forests Tasmania Report as required by Section 59D of the Forestry Act 1920 (Tas.)¹
- (vi) Be completed within three months of its commencement
- (vii) Develop a report detailing the review process and its findings.

The parties may extend the review period to ensure a rigorous process.

Terms of Reference

The role of the Independent Reviewer will be to review the *Third Report on Progress with Implementation of the Tasmanian RFA* and associated written public comments, and report to the Joint Working Group. The review will cover the 2007 to 2012 five-year period, using data reported in the State of the Forests Tasmania 2012 report.

The Independent Reviewer is required to:

5. Receive written submissions from the public on the *Third Five-yearly Report of Progress with Implementation of the Tasmanian RFA* with respect to the milestones and commitments of the RFA and, recognising the commitment to extend the Tasmanian RFA, receive public comments relevant to, and within the scope of, the proposed framework for the extension of the agreement.
6. Review written public submissions and undertake further targeted consultation with organisations or individuals as required, to clarify any issues raised in the written submissions.
7. Provide a written report to the Commonwealth and Tasmanian ministers responsible for forestry, which:
 - Provides comment on the Third Report on Progress with Implementation of the Tasmanian RFA, and any specific recommendations on implementation, considering the written public submissions received
 - Describes the key issues identified in the written public submissions.
 - Noting the policy framework as established by the National Forest Policy Statement, identifies any additional issues that could be considered for the continued implementation of the RFA in the context of the proposed extension of the agreement, including minor improvements that strengthen the RFA framework
 - Lists the names of the individuals and organisations who made written public submissions.
8. Deliver all written submissions and information used by the Independent Reviewer to the Joint Working Group with the report.

Administrative Arrangements

- The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have established a Joint Working Group to oversight the Review.
- The Joint Working Group shall provide administrative and technical support to the Review Team in undertaking its task.