

Statement of Support: Australian Forests and Climate Alliance

FOREST EMBASSY·FRIDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2018

Working to protect our native forests to secure a safe climate, connect and restore native forests for biodiversity, water and wildlife.

AFCA says: No further RFA renewals and repeal of those already renewed

Australia needs a forest policy based on protection and restoration

RFA industrial logging is ecologically disastrous be it in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania or Western Australia, and is subsidised, even as it depletes the national native forest resource.

Environmental failure

RFAs have legitimised the destruction of:

- the habitat of a multitude of species and pushed already threatened species closer to extinction
- water catchment processes, via
- siltation of waterways through heavy machinery in close proximity to streams and protective ground cover destruction
- loss of forest canopy that promotes regional rainfall precipitation

RFA logging jeopardises other enterprises, including:

- downstream aquatic industries
- farming dependent on regional rainfall precipitation and on forest micro-fauna for on farm ecosystem health
- industries entirely dependent on forest health, i.e. bee-keepers.

Rural and urban water supplies are jeopardised with loss of intact catchments.

RFAs ignore the reality that native forest logging is inherently GHG emissive and that the logging is preventing forests from sequestering and storing maximum carbon which they could do if allowed to mature and remain intact.

Scientists and the public * decry native forest logging government but are being ignored by an Industry intent on getting as much as it can of what is left of Australian forested lands. The government endorsed Industry blueprint for Australian forests to 2050 recommends increasing access by:

- allowing logging in formerly protected areas, e.g. flora reserves, rainforests and old growth in state forests
- logging national parks (already occurring now in Murray Valley National Park) and other crown land
- relaxing regulations for private land logging

- persuading owners or managers of indigenous native forests to introduce logging
- making inventories of the wood supply potential of **all forested lands – regardless of tenure**
- ‘certifying’ whether forests are supplying their ‘ecosystem services’ by a best practice management regime that would involve ‘ecological thinning’ (logging) or (supposed) bush fire control via mechanical fuel load reduction (logging with or without follow up burning).

These practices will permit industry to manipulate forest species composition for industry interests regardless of ecosystem impact.

Resource management and financial failure

RFA over logging has reduced yields and wood supplies so that wood is now sought from protected forests to maintain volumes.

The industry will continue to degrade the forest resource to supply:

- an increasing global demand for (any) wood for electricity generation and so called forest wood based ‘bio’ fuel technologies, (crude oils, so-called ‘bio’ diesel, ‘bio’ bitumen). BORAL has recently been gifted ARENA funds to look into supplying its national truck fleet with native forest based diesel.
- coal-based electricity generators attempting to prolong coal dependence via co-generation with wood

Patently flawed carbon accounting that deems wood based electricity a carbon neutral energy ignores the reality of the CO₂ it emits. Corrupt carbon accounting underpins the rise in and pressure coming from the global wood trade.

A consensus of scientific institutions, internationally, refute the claim that substituting fossil fuel with wood is carbon neutral and a climate change solution.

Australia must resist exploitation of its forests by this international push from powerful industry and trading interests and vigorously protect the native forests that remain and restore those already so severely damaged by the RFA regime.

**** Recent evidence of scientific and public rejection of native forest logging**

A 2016 industry national survey of over 11,500 rural and regional Australians showed: 65% of rural/regional and 70% of urban residents found it unacceptable; some were unsure; only 17% of rural and 10% of urban residents found it acceptable.

Of 5,425 submissions on NSW RFA reviews/renewals (many from scientists) only 23 supported renewal to permit ongoing native forest logging.

Of 3,148 submissions re the NSW RFA regulatory system (many from scientists) only 13% supported the native forest logging industry.

<https://spark.greenpeace.org.au/p/2020>