



# MEDIA RELEASE

## Future of State's red gum forests (3/12/ 2009)

### **Foresters deplore the NSW Premier's premature announcement about the future of the State's red gum forests**

The Institute of Foresters (IFA), with over 1350 members nationally, and many employed in scientific roles, has urged the NSW Natural Resources Commission (NRC), in its current review of NSW public Red gum forests, to take a pro-active management approach in addressing the declining health of the forests.

The NSW Premier's announcement today to declare 42,077 hectares of the Millewa Group Red Gum Forests as National Park, makes a mockery of due process and consideration of the views of stakeholders.

Many submissions have been made to the NRC, which was due to make its recommendations to Government on 21 December 2009. Every local community along the Murray and Murrumbidgee, represented by their local governments, has made submissions opposing the reservation of red gum State forests into National Park. The announcement by the Premier today has ignored the wishes of those communities, along with many other stakeholders including the timber industry and the IFA.

The IFA deplores this announcement because the concept of "saving" these forests by creating new National Parks flies in the face of scientific evidence about the interaction of future water flows and management of the number of trees per hectare to preserve a healthy forest.

Expansive areas of the regrowth river red gum forest are dead or dying from a lack of water. If water supply to these forests continues to be inadequate many more red gum trees will die without active intervention.

The IFA is concerned that transferring the red gum forests into National Park will not achieve the desired conservation outcomes or restore the forests' health. The IFA promotes pro-active management so that regrowth forests under threat are thinned out and the remaining number of trees per hectare is reduced to a level which retains forest structure, but trees survive. Under National Park tenure there are no current provisions for thinning for timber. Forests reserved in National Park will not be permitted to be harvested and the dead trees that remain in the forest may be expected to become a serious fire hazard.

The IFA understands that timber supplies will need to reduce but the levels of reduction are largely dependent on the tenure of the forests and policy for future management. The IFA believes that retaining tenure for these forests which allows for timber harvesting and continuing timber supply at a level which meets the range of objectives, is a far better socio-economic and environmental outcome than the alternative of locking up the forests in National Park.

Dr Peter Volker RPF FFA  
President

For media enquiries contact Ron Wilson: 0419 142 913