

# The Institute of Foresters of Australia

ABN 48 083 197 586



## National Park Estate (South-Western Cypress Reservations) Bill 2010

### Comments by the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) November 2010

The IFA reviewed the report and recommendations by Natural Resources Council (NRC) of May 2010 for the South Western NSW region and found the overall outcome to be reasonable. The NRC report and recommendations recognised the importance of forestry and the timber industry in South Western NSW and also recognised the particular growth habits of cypress forests. This latter recognition included the need to thin cypress to create forests with larger sized trees, suitable for timber production and conservation values.

The NRC recommendations provided for the transfer of 26,256 ha of State forests to National Park and other reserves, which were mostly woodland and did not affect timber supply.

The Government has largely adopted the NRC recommendations but has gone beyond those recommendations to reserve a further 20,609 ha of State forest to National Park and other reserves. These further reservations do affect timber supply because a number of those State forests contain commercial cypress timber. The Government is allowing Forests NSW to harvest the current crop of mature trees, under protocols, to minimise the impact on long term timber supply. The IFA understands that these extra reservations represent around 5% of long term timber supply.

The IFA is disappointed that the Government has seen fit to make these further reservations where commercial stands of cypress are contained. The NRC gave comprehensive explanations about how cypress forests benefit from thinning and turn into attractive stands.

The Government has stated that the further reservations will not affect the 20 year Wood Supply Agreements, which have been in effect for around 5 years, to the two existing sawmills. The IFA understands this to be true despite the lowering of sustainable timber supply over a longer horizon.

As a general comment the IFA is pleased that the principles used for determining the future of these forests took into account the growth habits of cypress and the importance of socio-economic factors for the sawmilling sector and rural communities. The 11th hour increase in transfer of State forest to National Park and other reserves is nevertheless disappointing.

The IFA believes that if the approach used by the NRC to the South Western cypress forests, had been used for the Brigalow Belt Bioregion assessment completed in 2005 and the Riverina Red gum assessment of 2010, outcomes for those two areas would have been different, leaving a better balance of forestry and rural industries with conservation.

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