

I refer to the 2015 Review of the Permanent Native Forest Estate Policy (PNFEP) and wish to comment as follows:

The PNFEP is a key requirement of the 1997 Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) as subsequently amended by the 2005 Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (TCFA) and has had a positive effect on limiting deforestation enabling Australia to meet its global commitments to reduce carbon emissions under the Kyoto Protocol.

<http://theconversation.com/australia-trounced-kyoto-climate-target-new-report-reveals-25744>

<http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/greenhouse-gas-measurement/tracking-emissions>

<http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/greenhouse-gas-measurement/publications/quarterly-update-australias-national-greenhouse-gas-inventory-sept-2014>

These commitments have recently been upgraded by PM Tony Abbott who has given assurances that Australia will reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2030.

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/2015-08-11/australias-2030-emissions-reduction-target>

It is therefore imperative that the commitments in the PNFEP to retain 95% of the 1996 Comprehensive Regional Assessment native forest area and phase out broad scale clearing and conversion on public land by 2010 and on private land by 2015 are maintained and strictly enforced.

I am however concerned that this review may be used as a pretext to weaken or even end the requirements of the Policy in order to facilitate future land clearing such as that proposed at Woolnorth which has the potential to decimate the Tasmanian Devil's last known, large, high-density and healthy population.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/dairy-boom-threatens-devils-paradise/story-e6frgczx-1226383956433>

In this regard, land clearing/deforestation has been well documented by the Federal Government as being one of the main threats to threatened species such as the swift parrot and Tasmanian Devil.

http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=744

http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=299

It therefore beggars belief that the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) should approve logging in swift parrot breeding habitat despite strong scientific advice against activity in the areas.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-22/endangered-swift-parrots-breeding-threatened-logging-advice/6339116>

It would also be extremely hypocritical for the Tasmanian Government to adopt the Tasmanian devil as its faunal emblem recently only to make it more vulnerable by weakening land clearing provisions.

http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/executive/protocol_office/state_symbols

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-31/tasmania-backs-the-devil-as-the-state-emblem/6510228>

Eastern Australia has been listed in a new report as a global front for deforestation and this can only be prevented by applying mandatory restrictions on land clearance such as those contained in the PNFEF.

<http://www.wwf.org.au/?13400/Eastern-Australia-listed-as-global-front-for-deforestation>

Australia also has one of the highest loss of species anywhere in the world to which deforestation is a contributing factor.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-19/fact-check-does-australia-have-one-of-the-highest-extinction/6691026>

It is therefore extremely concerning that the latest quarterly monitoring of the maintenance of the permanent native forest estate reports a decrease of 4.9% in native forest area with only 3,643.2 hectares remaining before the 95% threshold is reached.

http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/122707/Monitoring_of_the_permanent_native_forest_estate_1_Jul_2015.pdf.pdf

These figures demonstrate that an immediate moratorium should be applied on the clearing and/or conversion of all native forest.

Finally, I consider that although the Forest Practices Authority may be the most efficient authority for giving effect to the Policy this amounts to self-regulation rather than independent assessment. I would therefore recommend that reports into monitoring of the maintenance of the permanent native forest estate are audited annually by the Auditor-General.

Regards
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