



**Premier of New South Wales
Australia**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
ASSESSMENT OF RIVERINA RED GUM FORESTS**

The New South Wales Government intends to make a forest agreement with respect to the river red gum and woodland forests within the NSW Riverina IBRA and the South-Western Cypress State Forests in order to determine conservation outcomes and a sustainable future for the forests, the forestry industry and local communities in the region.

To inform that agreement and in accordance with section 13 (1)(e) & (g) of the *Natural Resources Commission Act 2003*, I request that the Commission:

1. Carry out a regional forest assessment of the scientific bioregion:
 - a) for the purposes of section 15 of the *Forestry and National Park Estate Act 1998* including an assessment of the following: environment and heritage values (including indigenous heritage), economic and social values, ecologically sustainable forest management, and timber resources; and
 - b) otherwise such that the assessment will also meet the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (C'th)*.
2. Recommend conservation, protection, economic and ecological sustainable use of public land in the bioregion.
3. Recommend water management and flooding requirements to sustain the forests and identified values and uses under the range of projected impacts of climate change.

The Commission should have regard to the following as they relate to the bioregion:

- Nationally agreed criteria for a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system;
- other complementary methodologies for protecting conservation values;
- the impacts of drought and climate change on the forests and communities;
- opportunities for ongoing and future employment within affected local communities;
- appropriate forest management practices in order to promote long term productivity and forest health;
- international or intergovernmental obligations, agreements or arrangements;
- NSW Government policies, programs and Catchment Action Plans;
- opportunities for indigenous involvement in forest management;
- appropriate access for commercial, recreational and community uses; and
- the existing science and body of knowledge about the region.

The Commission should consult with relevant NSW agencies including the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, the Department of Industry and Investment, the Land and Property Management Authority, the Treasury, the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The Commission should also consult with relevant Traditional Owners, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Elders groups and local government. The Commission should liaise with officers from the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to inform the design and conduct of the assessment.

The Commission should undertake public consultation to inform the assessment.

The Commission is to deliver the assessment in two phases:

1. The Commission is to deliver in relation to the Riverina IBRA:
 - an assessment under reference 1 by 30 September 2009; and
 - a report on terms of reference 2 and 3 by 30 November 2009.

2. The Commission is to deliver in relation to the South-Western Cypress State Forests:
 - an assessment under reference 1 by 31 December 2009; and
 - a report on terms of reference 2 and 3 in relation by 28 February 2010.