

THE TASMANIAN COMMUNITY FOREST AGREEMENT

FOREST CONSERVATION FUND NEWS

FCF website: www.deh.gov.au/land/forestpolicy/fcf/index.html

FCF email: fcf@deh.gov.au

FCF phone: 1800 803 772

Volume 3 May 2006

Release of the FCF Strategic Plan

The FCF Strategic Plan is now available at www.deh.gov.au/land/forestpolicy/fcf/index.html following its recent approval by the Australian and Tasmanian Government environment ministers. The Plan describes how the FCF will operate and how landowners can become involved in the program. The FCF Steering Committee is now focusing on rolling out the program to eligible landowners.

Summary of the Strategic Plan

The FCF is a voluntary programme that will reward landowners who commit to protect high value forests. By taking part in the FCF, landowners will receive financial assistance and the latest forest management support.

The FCF will build on the achievements of the Private Forest Reserves Program, by adding up to 45,600 hectares of forested private land to the Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) reserve system. The FCF will target old growth forest and under-reserved forest communities, including up to 2,400 hectares of forest to protect the karst values in the Mole Creek area.

Landowners will have an opportunity to participate in a competitive tender process, which will assess proposals for funding. Landowners with adjoining properties will also be able to submit group proposals. Proposals by landowners will be assessed for the conservation and management benefits they provide using a transparent and objective process. Landowners will have a choice of agreements to protect the forest values identified on their land, including management agreements and covenants. For the Mole Creek area a modified process is being developed.

The tender process will include the following steps:

- A service provider will advertise the tender process.
- Landowners register their interest with the service provider, and receive information kits.
- Independent conservation advisers (with knowledge of forest communities, funded by the FCF) will assess the quality of the forest conservation values and discuss management options but not financial or taxation matters with the landowner.
- Proposals will be developed by landowners with the support of the conservation adviser. Proposals consist of: a map detailing the area to be protected; an assessment of conservation values; identification of conservation management actions and the duration of the conservation agreement the landowner wishes to place on the land.
- The landowner will independently determine the cost of the service they are providing and submit their proposals in the tender process.
- The service provider will assess proposals and rank them using an objective assessment method.
- The service provider will provide assessments to the Steering Committee, who make recommendations to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage for funding approval.
- Successful landowners and the Australian Government will sign a financial contract and conservation agreement then funding is provided to the landowner.



Australian Government

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Landowner choice

Landowners who participate will have a choice in the:

- conservation management actions they offer to undertake; and
- duration of conservation agreement they offer to sign.

Supporting landowners in a partnership approach

Landowners who are successful in the tender process will be supported in managing their forest for conservation outcomes. Management actions will be developed in a partnership approach that meets both the landowner's and governments' needs. Elements of the partnership will include:

- independent on-ground conservation advisers working with landowners to develop practical conservation management actions;
- agreed conservation management actions that will be secured and funded through conservation agreements; and
- the Tasmanian Government will provide on-going monitoring of the terms of the conservation agreement.

What else has happened since the last newsletter?

Market Research

As part of the FCF communication strategy, market research will be undertaken to determine landowners' interest in participating in conservation programs and to identify the best ways to engage landowners and encourage their participation. The Department of the Environment and Heritage has employed a consultant to undertake this research over the upcoming months.

Service Provider

DEH will soon advertise a call for tenders from organisations or consortiums interested in undertaking the role of the FCF service provider. The service provider will be contracted to deliver on-ground components of the FCF, including communication activities and managing conservation assessments.

One of the first priorities for the service provider will be delivering the Mole Creek component. Once a landowner has expressed their interest, a conservation adviser will work with them to assess karst and forest conservation values on their property, and identify suitable land management actions to protect these values.

Assessment Methodology – Conservation Value Index

A group of ecological and economic experts, referred to as the Assessment Methodology Advisory Panel (AMAP), is assisting the FCF Steering Committee to develop an objective and accountable assessment methodology to assess forest conservation values and rank proposals from landowners. The methodology will be adjusted for Mole Creek to take into consideration karst conservation values. The FCF Advisory Group has provided input into the development of the methodology.



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Advisory Group meetings

Advisory Group meetings are held on an as-needs basis. Please speak with your local representative if you have any issues you would like raised at future meetings. Members are listed below:

Organisation	Member	Phone
Timber Communities Australia	Barry Chipman	(03) 6260 4442
Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association	Ian Whyte	(03) 6332 1800
Tasmanian Conservation Trust	Alistair Graham	(03) 6234 3552
NRM Regional Committee	Catherine Murdoch	(03) 6336 5303
Private Forests Tasmania	Mark Leech	(03) 6334 0915
Forest Practices Authority	Graham Wilkinson	(03) 6233 7451
Department of the Environment and Heritage	Tony Slatyer	(02) 6274 1919

Key Government Contacts

Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage via 1800 803 772.
Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water, Penny Wells on (03) 6233 3040



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