



## POSITION PAPER

### GREAT SOUTHERN FOREST

#### BACKGROUND

The National Trust, since its inception in 1945, has been involved in the debate in Australia over the use, protection and management of forests and woodlands. Some of its past actions in protecting the heritage significance of forests and woodlands include the 1974 Trust opposition to the clearing of native forests on the Boyd Plateau for establishing pine plantations, the 1979 Trust submission to the Terania Creek Commission of Inquiry urging the protection of the State's rainforests and the 1980 Trust Council approval of a Rainforest Preservation Policy. The Trust has listed on its Register a number of forests and woodlands including Border Ranges (1978), Washpool (1982), Barrington Tops (1984), Cumberland Plain Woodlands (1986) and Ben Halls Gap Old Growth Forest (1991). In 1986 the National Trust adopted its first Forests Policy and an April 2014 Forests and Woodlands Policy built on that earlier Policy. In 1986 the Trust adopted a Wilderness Conservation Policy and in February, 2015 adopted a revised and updated Wilderness Policy.

The National Trust's South Coast Regional Branch Chair, who is also spokesperson for the Great Southern Forest Steering Group, has invited the National Trust of Australia (NSW) to become a member of the Great Southern Forest Alliance and to endorse the Great Southern Forest proposal to protect Australia's ancient forests and unique wildlife, terminating the Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) process, ending the native forest logging and re-orienting Federal and State Governments to recognising public native forests as an important land-based means of climate stabilisation and carbon store. Of equal importance is the opportunity to engage with the Traditional Owners and learn from them their knowledge and skills in managing the relationships between human use and occupation and preservation of these places. The Great Southern Forest comprises 432,757ha of State Forests from Nowra to the Victorian border and inland to the Tumut region. The two existing State Forests' Regional Forest Agreements are set to expire in 2019 and 2021.

This proposal is in line with the Trust's Forests and Woodlands Policy, Wilderness Policy and Climate Change Policy.

#### NATIONAL TRUST POSITION

- The National Trust will become a member of the Great Southern Forest Alliance and endorse the Great Southern Forest Brief recommending that State and Federal Governments –
  - Espouse a new, ethically responsible long-term vision based on recognition that public native forests have far wider community values than their present use as a source of wood which can now be met from plantations.
  - Endorse changing management of these biodiverse ecosystems from destructive and loss-making logging under the failed RFA regimes to their crucial roles in the climate and water cycles, and to their major contributions to species diversity and community well-being.
  - Develop new management arrangements for the forests and, drawing on the best scientific advice and the knowledge of Traditional Owners, train a highly skilled workforce for diverse regional jobs in forest restoration and adaptation.
  - Share the value and respect regional communities have for our native forests: for their carbon sequestration and climate mitigation benefits; for their intrinsic uniqueness and beauty; and, for all their living creatures.

#### ACTION TO PROMOTE THE TRUST'S POSITION

The Trust will promote its views on this issue in the media and with the public and the Federal and NSW governments.