

## Great Southern Forest Executive Brief

The Great Southern Forest proposal centres on managing south eastern NSW publicly owned native forests for climate stabilisation and carbon sequestration rather than timber extraction, thereby reflecting relevant, contemporary values of forests.

The Great Southern Forest proposal is a widely researched, solutions-based initiative for the magnificent carbon and biodiversity dense south eastern native forests. It offers nature-based solutions to critical national and global problems at low cost and with great benefit in terms of climate stabilisation, environmental and economic success, increased resilience and biodiversity, regional employment, Indigenous participation and social coherence. It offers a new model of forest management which is relevant and transferable nationally and internationally. The Great Southern Forest can reduce forest fragmentation thereby equipping forests as a whole with the capacity to withstand and ameliorate a disrupted climate.

The vision is to link existing state native forests, national parks and private forests for the healthy resilience of a connected landscape; yet, this is not a proposal for further reserves.

GSF proposal recognises that:

- forests are vital for homeostatic climate stabilisation of the planet
- there are sufficient existing mature plantations to meet all of Australia's timber needs; some are state owned and located in the south eastern region
- while the Regional Forest Agreement process provides a timely window of attention on native forests, its assumptions and outcomes are wildly outdated in the light of scientific evidence and pressing world and regional problems
- the present system of management of south eastern native forests for timber extraction has overseen large environmental, economic, social and employment losses with inestimable damage to soil, water, biodiversity, wildlife and habitat with attendant brakes on social and economic well-being
- a shift in consciousness to an expanded perspective is required and is ripe to be accepted.

### **For the State's 432,575ha of Native Forests in Southeast NSW, GSF recommends that the 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.