



Australian Government

THE TASMANIAN COMMUNITY FOREST AGREEMENT

FOREST CONSERVATION FUND



Fact Sheet 1: General Information

What is the Forest Conservation Fund?

The Forest Conservation Fund (FCF) was agreed by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments as part of the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement of May 2005.

The FCF is a unique opportunity for Tasmanian landowners to be recognised for protecting old growth and under-reserved forest communities on private land.

Participation in the FCF is voluntary.

The FCF aims to protect up to 45,600 hectares of private forested land, targeting old growth and under-reserved forest communities. The target includes protection of a minimum of 25,000 hectares of old growth forest.

Private landowners who voluntarily participate in the FCF will be assisted in their efforts to conserve high value forests for the benefit of present and future generations.

The FCF is aimed at landowners with eligible forest communities (see Fact Sheet 8) who want to enter into conservation agreements to protect those values.

Landowners interested in the programme will be invited to submit a tender application to conserve their forest by entering into a conservation agreement. Technical advisers, called Conservation Advisers, are available to assist landowners with this process. Refer to Fact Sheet 3: FCF Tender Application for more information about the tender application process.

The Australian Government Department of the Environment and Water Resources (DEW) has responsibility for administration of the FCF. The Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water (DPIW) will provide on-going monitoring and management support services to private landowners who enter a conservation agreement.

The Australian Government recognises that many farmers are already good custodians of the land and hopes that the FCF can aid them in further conserving forested land. We also recognise the retention of native forest can provide productivity benefits to properties, where active management is important to maintain forested areas.

The decision to enter into a conservation agreement is an important decision for landowners. The FCF Fact Sheets will provide you with information to assist you with this decision. You should also take time to consult with family, business associates, legal and financial advisers, regarding any possible implications of entering into a conservation agreement.

What are the benefits of the FCF to me as a landowner?

- Participation is entirely voluntary.
- Your efforts in managing the forest will be recognised.
- You retain the ability to conduct many activities in your forest.
- Technical advice from Conservation Advisers is available at no charge.
- A free and non-binding site assessment of your forested land is available from a Conservation Adviser.
- You can specify the financial consideration you want to receive for protecting the conservation values of your forested land.
- You are protecting your forested land for present and future generations.
- Broader environmental benefits such as enhanced erosion and salinity control; shade and shelter for livestock; and protection of wetlands, catchments and water quality.
- You will receive expert advice in managing your land and improve your knowledge about land management for conservation.

What forest types is the FCF protecting?

The FCF aims to protect old growth and under-reserved communities (Refer Fact Sheet 8).

Who manages the FCF?

KPMG (Tasmania) leads a consortium (including Curtis NRA, Corporate Communications and SEMF Pty Ltd) that is the FCF Service Provider and is the main point of contact for landowners interested in the FCF. It has been contracted by the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Water Resources, which administers the Forest Conservation Fund with assistance from the Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries and Water.

The KPMG led consortium will manage the overall delivery of the FCF, including the Conservation Advisers.

Any questions you may have about the FCF can be directed to the Service Provider on 1300 854 456 for the cost of a local call or through fcf@environment.gov.au

The development and implementation of the FCF is overseen by a Steering Committee comprised of members from both the Australian and Tasmanian Governments.

The FCF Steering Committee also receives formal and informal advice and comments from stakeholders in a range of ways, including through an FCF Advisory Group that represents community and stakeholder views.

More information can be found on the FCF website

www.environment.gov.au/land/forestpolicy/fcf

Who are the Conservation Advisers and what do they do?

Independent Conservation Advisers are available to assist landowners in assessing the conservation values of their forested land and discuss management options for an appropriate level of continuing use of the forest. The Conservation Adviser will undertake a free and non-binding site assessment of the forested land you nominate and assist you to ensure the application process is as easy as possible. Conservation Advisers will not provide any financial advice.

The Conservation Advisers will

- be independent from the government and Service Provider
- be experienced in assessing Tasmanian vegetation communities
- have an understanding of forest and farm management practices.

A list of Conservation Advisers is provided in this information kit.

How will the FCF work?

As a private landowner you will have the opportunity to participate in a voluntary competitive tender process. The tender process will allow you to submit a confidential tender application to the FCF Service Provider. This application allows you to nominate the financial consideration you would like to receive for entering into a conservation agreement.

If you decide to participate in the FCF, the following steps are involved:

Step 1: The tender process will be advertised, asking interested landowners to contact the FCF Service Provider and register an expression of interest.

Step 2: After contacting the Service Provider, an information kit will be sent out to you if you do not already have one. The information kit will include the series of FCF Fact sheets covering: *General Information, Site Assessment, FCF Tender Application, Taxation, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, Case Studies and Scenarios, FCF Tender Application Checklist; a List of Conservation Advisers, and a Request for Site Assessment.*

Step 3: To arrange a free site assessment, you will need to provide some information about your property on the *Request for Site Assessment Form* to the FCF Service Provider and nominate your preferred Conservation Advisers from the list. A Conservation Adviser will contact you to arrange a suitable time for the site assessment. The Conservation Adviser will visit your property to assess the conservation value of your forested land and discuss options for maintaining or improving the forest's values such as grazing regimes and weed control. They will help you identify if you are eligible to submit a tender application. If the forest types on your property you are offering are not those sought by the FCF, you will be referred to alternative conservation programmes if you wish.

Step 4: Once you have decided the details to be included in your FCF tender application, the Conservation Adviser will help prepare your proposal, and send it to you to check. Once you are happy with the details, you complete the proposal by submitting it to the Service Provider by the required date advertised during the tender round.

Step 5: An independent panel will assess and rank all the tender applications on value for money, based on the financial consideration you are seeking and

- Significance; the current conservation values of your forested land.
- Service; the management activities you are willing to undertake to maintain or improve the values of your forested land.
- Security; the level of protection offered in terms of the duration of the conservation agreement.

Step 6: Successful proposals are approved by the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Water Resources.

Step 7: If your tender application is approved, a financial agreement will be offered to you. The financial agreement will require a commitment from you to enter into a conservation agreement. You will receive an initial payment once you accept the financial agreement. The conservation agreement will then be executed by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water (DPIW). The conservation agreement will be signed by you and the Tasmanian Minister Administering the Nature Conservation Act (2002). The management activities submitted by you in the FCF tender application will form part of the conservation agreement. You will receive a second and final payment once the conservation agreement has been executed.

If your application is not successful, the FCF Service Provider will notify you and refer you to other land management programme options, if available.

Step 8: Monitoring and management support services will be provided by DPIW for the duration of the conservation agreement.

Further information

If you would like further information on the FCF please call the FCF Service Provider on 1300 854 456 for the cost of a local call or email fcf@environment.gov.au

For background information, you may also like to visit the Department of the Environment and Water Resources website at www.environment.gov.au/land/forestpolicy/fcf