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Ms Andrea Agocs
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
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Dear Andrea

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT: EXTENDING THE AGREEMENT BEYOND MAY 2019

The Forest Industries Federation of WA (FIFWA) is the association for the timber industry in Western Australia. FIFWA is representative of almost all the major companies and businesses that operate in the WA timber industry. WA's timber industry has a total gross value of output of about \$1.4 billion, contributing \$643 million to the WA economy each year and around 6000 jobs across regional WA¹. We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the WA RFA, in the context of extending the agreement beyond May 2019.

We welcome the commitment by the Australian and Western Australian governments to the 20-year extension of WA RFA, with five-year rolling extensions, subject to satisfactory performance demonstrated through five-yearly reviews. The fact of a rolling 20-year horizon for the RFA will provide more confidence for industry than would otherwise be the case.

In accordance with your letter of 28th September 2018, we recognise that while the WA RFA is not up for renegotiation, there is consideration to modernise, streamline and strengthen the framework. The RFA is crucial in providing a robust framework in which the key operational instrument, the WA Forest Management Plan can function. FIFWA is supportive of a modernised, streamlined and strengthened RFA – one that takes into account economic and social impacts; greater certainty of resource; and climate change, adaptation and carbon cycles. We would not be supportive of changes to any processes that would result in lengthened waiting times or increased bureaucracy which would hamper industry. Similarly we would not be supportive of changes that further restrict the amount of available state forest for timber harvesting.

¹ Schirmer, J., Mylek, M., Magnusson, A., Yabsley, B. and Morison, J. (2017). *Socio-economic impacts of the forest industry Western Australia*,. Forest and Wood Products Australia.

The reviews must be carried out in a timely way to maintain the integrity of the process and to boost both resource security and industry's social license. The improved communication and consultation stated in the letter are also beneficial in this regard.

As previously communicated in our submission addressing the period 3 report on progress, FIFWA is supportive of the original intent of the WA RFA. FIFWA still strongly holds that the industry requires the level of continuity and confidence in long-term timber supply that the RFA was designed to provide, to drive much needed development and investment in the industry. Also communicated at this time was our view that the original intent of the WA RFA has been undermined, and this must be given serious consideration during the renewal process.

We believe there should be more attention accorded to the economic and social outcomes of the RFA to balance the prevailing focus on environmental outcomes. FIFWA submits that equal weighting should be given to these three objectives.

We look forward to a renewed and improved WA RFA and welcome further consultation from the Joint Working Group.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Granger', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Granger
Chief Executive Officer (Acting)

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