

The 2017 - 2018 Annual General Meeting of the South-West Forests Defence Foundation Inc. will be held at **6.00 pm on Tuesday 11th December 2018, at 112 Eric Street, Cottesloe. Please note the starting time and venue.**

The agenda is as follows:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous AGM
3. President's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. Auditor's report
6. Election of office bearers and committee members for 2018
7. Special resolution to amend the SFDF rules of association
(read the new version here: www.southwestforestsdefence.org/home/rules)
8. Other business

Nominations for the positions of President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer and five committee members are called for.



SOUTH-WEST FORESTS DEFENCE FOUNDATION INC.
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www.southwestforestsdefence.org

NEWSLETTER – November 2018
Notice of Annual General Meeting

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SFDF's Rules of Association

There is now a new *Associations Incorporation Act*, and we have taken the opportunity to completely rewrite the SFDF's Rules of Association – see our website. We are notifying all financial members of the new Rules, and hope you will attend the AGM to ensure they are approved.

WA's forests campaign gets new lease of life

The WA Forest Alliance (WAFA) is putting forests back on the public agenda. It has attracted hundreds of new supporters and reinvigorated old friends. It runs stalls at events in the Perth area and throughout the South West to tell the public the facts about forest management and sell its attractive T-shirts. It is pursuing its innovative Forests For Life campaign, which has widespread community support. It has successfully protected hundreds of hectares of old growth forest missed by the forest managers. It continues to challenge the Controlled Wood certification wrongly granted to the Forest Products Commission (FPC) for its destructive karri forest management. It has made powerful submissions to the perfunctory mid-term performance review of the Forest Management Plan 2014-2023 (FMP), and the attempt to renew WA's failed Regional Forest Agreement (RFA). It organised a successful occupation of an ancient karri tree and plans more such tactics. For more information about WAFA, go to waforestalliance.org

The SFDF continues to provide financial support to WAFA, made possible largely by generous gifts in the wills of friends of the forests. These have also enabled the SFDF to look at possible legal challenges to forest mismanagement and departmental misinformation.

Why are we logging our forests?

This is the question no one seems to ask. When put to staff in the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), they replied without hesitation: employment and economic activity. Neither reason holds up.

Direct employment in native forestry in WA is fewer than 500, and these workers could be encouraged to transfer to plantation forestry.

Whatever economic activity it generates, native forestry has cost WA taxpayer millions in subsidies to the FPC. In addition and never mentioned is the fact that native forestry (logging and burning) imposes heavy costs on major south-west industries: wine and honey production, and tourism.

The real reason may be found in a speech made by a Liberal Senator from South Australia: "I'm sure that trees were put on this earth in the very first instance because they were able to be cut down, because they would grow again and because they would provide a resource for myriad different things...."

Possible huge increase in logging

The FPC is trying to find markets for massive amounts of low-grade logs. One possibility is a "plywood veneer peeling facility" in Nannup. The Federal Government is prepared to grant Nannup Timber Processing \$22 million to construct it, and has asked for a business case. If the proposal goes ahead, it would mean a huge increase in logging.

Why WA's Regional Forest Agreement should not be renewed or extended

The Federal Government and at the federal level, the Coalition and the ALP have decided that the WA 20-year RFA should be renewed when it expires in May 2019. The McGowan Government hasn't disclosed its decision.

However, staff in the FPC and DBCA have made up their minds: WA's RFA will be renewed. Worse than that, it is to have perpetual life. After five years, five years will be added to the term of the agreement so that it will continue in perpetuity.

There has been no public consultation or examination of the outcomes of 20 years of RFA implementation.

The objectives of the RFA were to provide for a comprehensive, representative and adequate conservation reserve system; ecologically sustainable management and use of forests in the South-West Forest Region; and long-term stability of forests and forest-based industries. It has failed to achieve any of its objectives.

Prime Minister John Howard and WA Premier Richard Court signed the WA RFA on 4th May 1999. Responding to massive community pressure, Premier Court immediately increased the area of forest protected in reserves.

A 10-year campaign to save old-growth forest helped the ALP get elected in 2001 with its policy to protect old growth, and the Gallop Government created 36 new national parks and nature reserves, adding 24 to the 12 new national parks promised by the RFA.

Today, according to the FMP, 36% of the forest in the FMP area is in statutory reserves, 11% is in informal reserves (some of which will be logged), and 38% is State forest available for logging. 15% is not vested under the CALM Act.

WA's improved conservation reserve system owes its existence not to the RFA but in spite of it.

The RFA has not provided ecologically sustainable management and use of forests. Today, more forest-dwelling species of plants and animals are listed as endangered than there were in 1999 or have moved to a higher category of threat, and the increased impacts of climate change on forest ecosystems are largely ignored.

Phytophthora cinnamomi and *P. multivora* ravage jarrah forest ecosystems. Armillaria and other fungal diseases invade karri regrowth and kill the trees or degrade the wood. Marri across its range in all tenures is dying from marri canker. There is no cure for any of these diseases.

Finally, the RFA has not ensured the long-term stability of forests and forest-based industries. Since 1999, our forests have continued to be logged unsustainably, and both the quality and quantity of logs have decreased. In 1999, there were 68 sawmills buying native forest logs from the FPC. Today there are 19.

The FPC makes little or no profit on its native forest operations and has been propped up with big subsidies.

Economics, logic, common sense and ethics all dictate that WA's RFA should not be renewed or extended.