

IN THE BALANCE

10 FACTS ABOUT THE EDEN REGION



TIMBER NSW

1. Native forest is the predominant land-use in the Eden Region and forestry is the Region's largest industry and its biggest employer. The economy and social fabric of the town of Eden is dependent on forestry.
2. The town of Eden is socio-economically disadvantaged. Since the transfer of State Forests to National Parks in 1999 the town's population has declined and its level of its disadvantage has increased. The 2011 National Census reveals that Eden is now ranked in the bottom 3% of the State under the Commonwealth's SEIFA index.
3. Available sawlog resources that supply the Eden timber industry have been depleted and are expected to run out before 2018. If they do, the local sawmill will close and the future of the chip mill will be put in doubt. These businesses are the two largest private employers in the Region. A combination of onerous operating regulations, overly optimistic growth models, poor yield control and poor yield forecasting has resulted in available sawlog resources being depleted well before the Region's vast regrowth forests have had opportunity to mature.
4. Two separate independent reports (2014) on the state of the region's wood resources have revealed that the Forestry Corporation grossly over-estimated the amount of wood that the forests would yield and the rate at which its young forests would mature. Poor management of the sawlog mix and the region's best regrowth forests has also impacted on the region's capacity to produce a viable sawlog mix in the future.
5. The impact of environmental regulation on wood availability has also been underestimated. The Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOA) for Eden Region contains over 2,000 operating conditions. Combined, these conditions have heavily constrained where and how much timber has been cut. Operating rules prevent harvesting in the most productive parts of the forest which means areas left available for timber harvesting produce below average yields.
6. Between 1996 and 1998, 102,000 hectares of Eden Region State forest was transferred into National Park. Conservation reserve targets for forest ecosystem protection were exceeded by 203%. The Region's best wood producing forests located in the hinterland of Eden Region (e.g. Tantawangalo and Coolangubra) were all included within the reserve.
7. The Region's hinterland forests are no longer subject to active management and woody thickening has made them more prone to high intensity wildfire. Eden Region is overdue for a catastrophic wildfire event (if history is any guide). Such a fire can be expected to have a major long term impact on biodiversity and wood resources and is highly likely to put life and property at risk.
8. The lack of planned fire in the Eden landscape is increasing the risk of catastrophic fire and also impacting on forest health. Dieback has become an increasingly common feature in Eden forests. To avert the loss of forest values (biodiversity and timber) from catastrophic wildfire a change in management practice is urgently needed.
9. The NSW Government has no choice but to act. Balance needs to be restored between environmental, social and economic values. This can only be achieved by making additional forest areas available for timber production. A return of one quarter of the Region's hinterland forests to timber production would ensure a sustainable future for the industry and the Region's forest dependent community.
10. For biodiversity to be protected a whole of landscape approach is needed which embraces more active management of fire, pests and weeds.