



# Australia's State of the Forests Report

## Case studies

## Criterion 2

### Maintenance of productive capacity of forest ecosystems

#### Case study 19: Reductions in sustainable yield in Western Australia

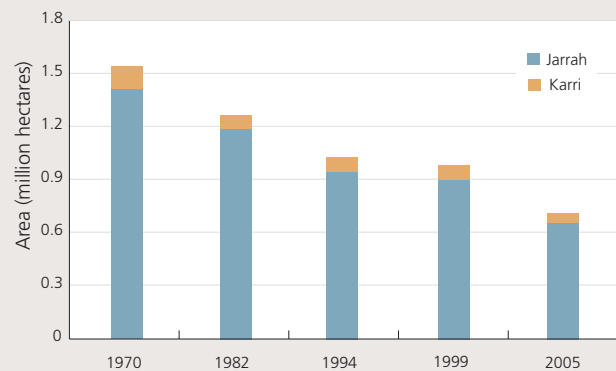
In Western Australia, the principle of sustainability is embodied in state legislation relevant to the Forest Products Commission (the state government's wood-trading enterprise) and the Department of Environment and Conservation (the state's forest management agency).

Since 1970, the area of native forest available for timber production in the state's southwest has decreased by about 50% (Figure 42). This reflects a shift in state government policies brought about by the increasing value the community is placing on native forests for uses other than timber production, which has led to an increase in the amount of native forest placed in reserves where wood production is not permitted.

The level of harvest in native forests is determined by a sustainable yield, defined as the quantity of timber that can be harvested from the area of forest available for timber harvesting each year, which, if continued indefinitely, will cause minimal long-term environmental impact. The timber resource in native forest available for timber harvesting is measured using inventory plots to determine the quantity of timber available and the rate at which the forest is growing.

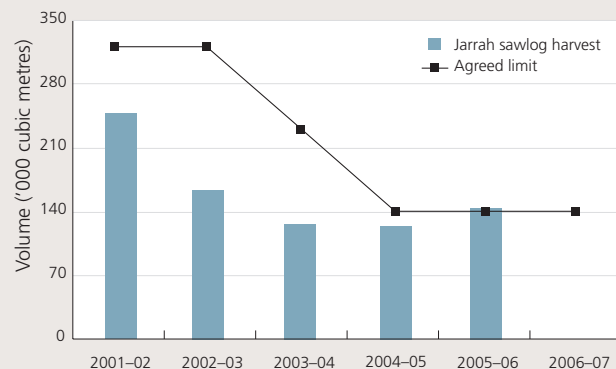
Sustainable yields were reviewed during the preparation of the *Forest Management Plan 2004–13*, which covers all the main timber production areas in the state's southwest. As a result of this review, the sustainable yield for sawlogs was reduced because of large increases in conservation reserves (and therefore decreases in the area of forest available for harvesting) and more conservative forest management practices. Sustainable yields for jarrah and karri sawlogs were lowered by 63% and 64%, respectively, over pre-2004 levels established by RFAs (Figures 43 and 44). In 2005–06, actual harvested volumes of karri sawlogs was 98% of sustainable yield levels. Although the jarrah harvest was 104% of the sustainable yield in that year, the Forest Management Plan allows over cuts in given years as long as the three-year average is at or below the sustainable yield. Marri sawlogs are largely unused; only about 8% of the sustainable yield of marri bole logs was harvested in 2005–06.

Figure 42: Trends in the area of jarrah and karri available for timber harvesting, 1970 to 2005



Source: EPA WA (2007)

Figure 43: Jarrah sawlog timber harvested relative to agreed limits

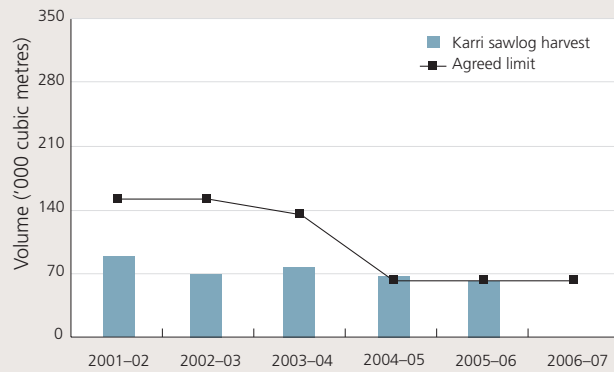


Note: 2003–04 limits represent a transition from previous limits established under RFAs to current limits established under the *Forest Management Plan 2004–13*.

Source: EPA WA (2007)

Source: EPA WA (2007)

**Figure 44: Karri sawlog timber harvested relative to agreed limits**



Note: 2003-4 limits represent a transition from previous limits established under RFAs to current limits established under the *Forest Management Plan 2004-13*.

Source: EPA WA (2007)

Prepared by the Montreal Process Implementation Group for Australia on behalf of the Australian, state and territory governments.

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