

2. Environment – North Coast Region version 2

I am writing to express my opposition to the Government's proposed changes to the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (IFOA).

The new IFOA abandons any semblance of ecologically sustainable forest management (ESFM) by proposing the clearfelling of 140,000 hectares of coastal forests between Grafton and Taree;

'remapping and rezoning' old-growth for logging; reducing headwater stream buffers; permitting the logging of giant trees and approximately doubling the intensity of logging in the 'selective harvesting zone'.

By abandoning ESFM, the Government has destroyed the social license of the logging industry.

The new IFOA ignores reality. Widespread declines in wildlife has prompted the Australian Senate to call an inquiry into our threatened species crisis. Overlogging has reduced sawlog resources throughout coastal NSW, a fact recognised by the industry itself. The number of jobs and mills has collapsed and logging now accounts for about 0.03% of primary industries employment. This will get worse as climate change and forest dieback make future timber resources increasingly uncertain - an issue highlighted in the Natural Resources Commission report but ignored in the IFOA.

The new IFOA will heighten the impacts of logging on threatened species, and exacerbate key threatening processes such as the loss of hollow-bearing trees and bell-miner associated dieback. The intensive harvesting zone will destroy almost half of the mapped high-quality koala habitat in state forests.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the best use of forests is to protect the wildlife that the tourism industry depends upon; protect the water supplies that our communities rely on and store the carbon that is driving climate breakdown. Polling in the electorates of Ballina and Lismore show that 90% of people agree. Yet the new IFOA directly undermines all of these imperatives, just to meet unrealistic wood supplies for a few short years.

Destroying what is left of the ecological values of state forests and logging protected areas to meet wood supply is not the action of a responsible Government. One of the recommendations in Ewan Waller's report into the RFA consultation was that the Government conduct a review of the logging industry considering climate change, conservation, socio-economic issues and support for the logging industry. This is the least the community can expect.

I urge you to abandon the IFOA, and instead use the end of the Regional Forest Agreements to transition out of native forest logging on public land and implement positive alternatives like NPA's Great Koala National Park and Forests For All proposals.