

FORESTRY ACT 2012

**AMENDMENT NO. 8 TO THE INTEGRATED FORESTRY
OPERATIONS APPROVAL FOR RIVERINA RED GUM**

The Integrated Forestry Operations Approval for Riverina Red Gum is amended as set out in the Schedule to this instrument.

This instrument commences on the last day of signature below.

This instrument is made under section 69R of the *Forestry Act 2012*.

Notes do not form part of this instrument. They are provided to assist understanding only.

Dated:



Penny Sharpe MLC
Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage
Dated



Tara Moriarty MLC
**Minister for Agriculture, Regional
New South Wales, Western New South Wales**
Dated

**SCHEDULE – AMENDMENTS TO THE INTEGRATED FORESTRY
OPERATIONS APPROVAL FOR RIVERINA RED GUM**

[1] Clause 5(4)

Insert after the note after clause 5(4B):

"4C. This approval applies to a program of early thinning operations carried out in the Riverina State forests (excluding western land leases) for the purpose of producing up to 229,905 tonnes of river red gum residue between 1 July 2024 and 31 December 2030 (inclusive) (that is, 35,370 x 6.5). No more than 229,905 tonnes of river red gum residue may be produced from the program of early thinning operations during that period. This residue is in addition to the residue produced from the logging operations referred to in clause 5(2).

Note: It is intended that the provisions related to early thinning operations, including this clause 5(4C), will be revisited following the outcome of the review of this approval conducted in accordance with clause 26 of this approval. The residue and residue logs volume may be revised as part of this review, scheduled to commence in 2024. Clause 5(4C) may be amended at any time in accordance with s 69R of the *Forestry Act 2012* (NSW)."

STATEMENT OF REASONS

AMENDMENT NO. 8 TO THE INTEGRATED FORESTRY OPERATIONS APPROVAL FOR RIVERINA RED GUM

Reasons for amendments

This instrument includes amendments to the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (IFOA) for the Riverina Red Gum Region.

This amendment is to allow for the continuation of early thinning operations at existing volumes from 1 July 2024 until 31 December 2030 on a pro rata basis, retaining two standalone residue volume caps.

Extension related to early thinning operations

The amendment maintains the existing timber residue supply for industry. During this period, the long-term sustainable volume of all timber products in red gum State forests will be independently assessed as part of a review of the Western IFOAs, including the Riverina Red Gum IFOA. If this amendment was not made, early thinning operations would not have been permitted after 30 June 2024.

The amendment is consistent with principles of ecologically sustainable forest management given it continues existing IFOA requirements, is complemented by a range of biodiversity protections set by the IFOA, provides for management practices that are considered to improve the long-term productive capacity and health of the forests, and provides for ongoing economic benefits for the Riverina region and timber industry.

The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC

Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy,
Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage,
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council



DOC24/299744

The Hon. Tara Moriarty
Minister for Agriculture, Regional NSW, Western NSW
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister

I am seeking your agreement to jointly amend the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (IFOA) for the Riverina Red Gum (RRG) region to make minor amendments to the existing authorisation of early thinning operations for an additional six years.

Background to the proposed amendment

Early thinning operations carried out in the Riverina state forests to produce RRG timber residues are regulated by the IFOA. For the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2024 the IFOA authorised the taking of early thinning residues from certain areas capped at 176,850 tonnes (annualised at 35,370 tonnes per year). The volume cap for early thinning residue is separate from, and is not combined with, the high quality large log residue volume cap.

I understand that the early thinning residue volume cap expires shortly on 30 June 2024. In accounting for this, I propose to only extend the early thinning residue volume cap on a pro rata basis and continue to retain the early thinning residue volume cap separately from the residue and residue logs volume cap. This approach maintains current rates and does not represent a change in intensity. This process is consistent with the 2019 amendment to extend early thinning volume caps by 5 years.

As you are aware, a review of the Western IFOAs, which includes the RRG region, will commence this year. This will include an independent review of the sustainable supply of timber in these forests. This proposal to extend early thinning operations by amending the RRG IFOA would provide continuity of the residue supply from early thinning for industry whilst the independent review is undertaken.

Joint approval of the proposed amendment for a 6.5-year extension

An amendment to an IFOA is to be made jointly by the Ministers authorised to grant an IFOA (s 69R *Forestry Act 2012*). We are the Ministers authorised to make that grant (s69N *Forestry Act*).

I have enclosed the instrument for amending the IFOA (with the accompanying statement of reasons), signed by me, for your consideration. The amending instrument provides for an annualised volume cap for river red gum residue from early thinning operations of 35,370 tonnes per year and a total volume cap of 229,905 tonnes for 6.5 years to 31 December 2030. There is no change to the existing, separate the high quality large log residue volume cap of 17,533 tonnes per year. A drafting note in the amendment indicates that further amendments may be considered following the review of the IFOA.

Public consultation is not required for minor amendments

The amendment is only to extend current rates of early thinning volumes for a short period of 6.5 years. I consider the proposed amendment to be of a minor nature, meaning public consultation on the proposal is not required (s69RA *Forestry Act*) and it has not been undertaken. While the

proposed amendment can be made without public consultation where either Minister entitled to grant an IFOA amendment forms this view, it would be prudent for you to also consider this issue.

If you also consider the proposed amendment of the IFOA is of a minor nature, and if you support the amendment, please sign and date the amendment instrument and return it to my office as soon as possible and by no later than the 21 June 2024. This timing is intended to avoid a disruption of residue supply to industry, given that the current authorisation for early thinning operations expires on 30 June 2024.

If the amendment is made, I will arrange for public notice and public availability of the amendment in accordance with s 69I of the Forestry Act. I will also cause a copy of the IFOA and the accompanying statement of reasons for the amendment to be sent to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament so that those documents can be tabled.

If you need further information, please contact Nancy Chang on 02 8275 1611 or nancy.chang@epa.nsw.gov.au.

Sincerely



Penny Sharpe MLC
Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy,
Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage

31/5/24

Encl: instrument for amending the IFOA for consideration