

Remake of the Coastal IFOAS
Environment Protection Authority,
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***Submission to the Remake of the Coastal Integrated Forestry
Operations Approvals (IFOA) Discussion paper – February 2014.***

WeatherTex Pty Ltd wish to make this submission in response to the public consultation.

From the “State of the Forests” report 2013,
“there was a small increase in carbon stocks in Australia's forests from 12,831 to 12,841 million tonnes over the period 2005—10, in contrast to 103 million tonnes (more than 8 times forests) of carbon derived from forests present in wood and wood products in construction and buildings and including paper. This is a 7 million tonnes increase from 2005 and 14 million tonnes more than in 2000.

Clearly locking up native forests, quarantining them from sustainable forestry is not working in increasing our carbon sinks.

The IFOA contains the conditions that the Forestry Corporation of NSW and its harvesting contractors must comply with in order to conduct forest operations and deliver wood to the native forest industry. This remake as outlined in the discussion paper will reduce complex duplication of regulation that is costly to administer and implement and should deliver the best environmental outcomes and efficient forest production.

- 2.1 The objectives of the IFOA remake are clearly stated along with a commitment to “no net change to wood supply and no erosion of environmental values”. However through erosion of harvestable areas the quality, size and species mix made available to the industry has declined. The NSW government should as part of the principle of triple bottom line accounting, strengthen this commitment to ensure that the forests made available to regional wood processors are economically viable to harvest and that the standard or quality of the mix of timber that they produce will be maintained
- 2.2 The scope of IFOA remake is clear and valuable. The EPA should strive to achieve consistency across the state.
4. The NSW forestry planning framework is complex and not user friendly which causes confusion and leads to perverse outcomes. Any streamlining and clarity that can be provided to the IFOA remake is welcomed.

- 4.3 Clarity for regulators and those engaged in forestry operations is long overdue and rationalization to one all-encompassing licence is welcomed.
5. The proposed aims of the IFOA structure are commendable and harmonizing regulatory conditions to one licence is welcomed.
- 5.1 The remake IFOA and licence structure to reduce prescriptions, provide clarity to intent, contains best-practice protocols and guidance material, introduces greater flexibility, is outcome-based, has a landscape focus, is easier to implement and improves enforceability is welcomed. The landscape approach is utilized in Tasmania, Canada and the USA and the protocols are the same for all tenure.
- 5.2 The regulatory approach under the new coastal IFOA is supported.
- 5.3 The proposal for the introduction of minimum competencies for forest contractors is supported for reasons of efficiency and continuous improvement.
6. The areas to be covered by the IFOA are noted.
7. Landscape-based protection for threatened species and communities is noted and welcomed. However reassurance is sought that Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) and Endangered Ecological Communities (EEC) will not be systematically expanded as a method of further eroding the area available for harvesting. A system of replacing an area removed from harvesting as a result of newly established TEC and EEC with another area for harvesting is recommended.
- 7.1 Weaknesses in managing impacts on TS and communities
Surveys are costly for specific species and do not end up protecting much more habitat than is covered under general landscape reservations. Numerous examples given. Threatened ecological communities not currently covered in IFOA.
- 7.2 Move to multi-scale landscape-based protection for TS and TC
General licence conditions will provide for strategic landscape scale habitat protection to include TS protection provisions within the broader landscape.
- 7.3 Developing the licence framework for Threatened Species and Communities
The effective application of landscape scale management principles is welcomed and will enable disturbances by harvesting and burning to be integrated with other natural disturbances and subsequent recovery.
- 7.4 Bell Miner Associated Dieback
This is a growing problem in forest/park areas which requires further research and implementation of programs to reduce the infestation of psyllids and subsequently control the rapid population growth of Bell Miners.

- 8.2 Proposed changes to soil and water protection components of IFOA will reduce the number of licence conditions, remove duplication and reduce the prescriptive nature which will lead to greater clarity and standardization.
- 8.3 A steep slope harvesting trial is proposed and supported.
- 9.1 LiDAR and Geonet technologies will provide more accurate stream mapping and boundary marking should assist in removing the “in-built buffer” system.
- 10 The NSW government through the EPA should as a priority, utilize the opportunity for the introduction, management and maintenance of a landscape scale strategic forest monitoring system that is designed using sound scientific principles for use across all land tenures

Under the current regulatory framework there is no consistency in the way human-induced disturbance events are regulated and managed and no monitoring of their relative impacts. For example, around 31,000 hectares¹ (<2%) of State forest are annually disturbed by selective timber harvesting (this includes western Cypress forests). In comparison, wildfires burn an average of 280,000 hectares (4%)² per year of National Parks and Reserves. Over half of these wildfires are human-induced (not started from natural causes). In the aftermath of disturbance events such as wildfire and harvesting, native fauna and flora are more exposed and susceptible to invasive pest and weed threats. There is a strong case for government to look more holistically at all agents of human-induced forest disturbance, their relative impacts and mitigation measures. We endorse the submission from the NSW Forest Products Association.

Yours Sincerely



Paul Michael
Executive Chairman
WEATHERTEX Pty Ltd