

Communique 3: Fifth Steering Committee Meeting

This is the third Communiqué from the NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee, which oversees the NSW Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program. The Steering Committee includes NSW government agencies and independent scientific experts, as outlined under the Program's Terms of Reference.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan

The Steering Committee endorsed the Program's Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan (see below). This plan sets out a timeline and opportunities for the community to provide input to the design, implementation and review of the Program from 2019 to 2021. Annual forums will be established as a key Program milestone from September 2020, bringing together a broad range of interested stakeholders to review information from the program and discuss insights for adaptive forest management.

[Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan 2019-2021](#)

Program budget

The Steering Committee noted the Program's budget expenditure in the 2018-19 financial year. The Steering Committee requested quarterly financial reports. The Steering Committee will continue to direct and approve major funding proposals in line with the Program Framework 2019-2024.

[Program Framework 2019-2024](#)

Plot network design and remote sensing program

The Steering Committee noted that the state-wide technical working group is developing the metrics and monitoring methods for the NSW cross-tenure plot network and remote sensing program. An expert workshop will be held in November 2019 to discuss metrics, stratification and sampling methods. A workshop on remote sensing platforms and data will follow.

Regional stakeholder forums

Fifty-four stakeholders attended nine regional stakeholder forums held in late September and early October to discuss the work of the Program. The forums were held in Port Macquarie, Grafton, Batemans Bay, Eden and Sydney. A wide range of stakeholders attended the forums, including community organisations, forest managers, industry groups, research organisations, and Aboriginal organisations. The forums provided constructive input on the design of the [Coastal IFOA Monitoring Program](#) – a draft of which was published on the Commission's website in mid-October for public comment. Stakeholders noted issues such as climate change, water quality, fire management, biosecurity and heritage should be the focus of the broader Program.

Priority evaluation questions

Monitoring, evaluation and research under the Program will respond to priority information needs of decision-makers and the community. The Steering Committee noted that the Program team is currently collating potential information needs and evaluation questions

based on submissions to the Program Framework, stakeholder feedback at regional forums and community feedback in previous submissions to agencies about forest management. The Program team will consult further with forest managers and forest policy makers about their priority information needs. The Program will consult the community on a working list of priority information needs and evaluation questions in early 2020.

Aboriginal engagement plan

The Steering Committee noted work to develop an Aboriginal Engagement Plan for the Program. The Steering Committee directed the Program team to design and implement a long term approach to Aboriginal engagement, which harnesses agencies' local networks and Aboriginal engagement staff. Following consultation with peak Aboriginal organisations, the draft Aboriginal Engagement Plan will be finalised for the Steering Committee's consideration and endorsement.