

Communique 2: Fourth Steering Committee Meeting

This is the second Communique of the NSW Government Forest Monitoring Steering Committee, which comprises the NSW government agencies and independent scientific experts, as outlined under the Program's Terms of Reference.

The fourth meeting of the Steering Committee:

- endorsed the final Program Framework 2019-2024
- discussed the selection of foundational projects
- discussed the forest monitoring program's linkages to the NSW Government's Biodiversity Indicators Program
- discussed the upcoming regional stakeholder forums to be held in late September and early October.

Program framework

The Steering Committee endorsed the Program Framework 2019-2024. This version addresses community feedback provided through submissions on a draft framework. The Program Framework establishes aims, principles and a clear set of time-bound deliverables and responsibilities. The Steering Committee's response to community feedback is documented [here](#).

Foundational Projects

The Steering Committee agreed to progress the design of a permanent cross-tenure plot network to measure key forest attributes, linked to remote sensing, as the primary foundational project for the program. The plot network will be developed through cross-agency collaboration and support from independent experts, with a design in place by mid-2020. Plot measurements, remote sensing and scenario modelling will help us to better understand how the condition of forests and associated habitats are changing over space and time in NSW. It will also help us to better understand how present and past forest management has affected the condition of forests. The plot network will build on previous plot networks where possible, and draw on or seek synergies with existing indicator programs such as the NSW Biodiversity Indicators Program.

The Steering Committee also agreed to allocate funding to two other foundational projects under the Program. The first project will expand acoustic monitoring for fauna species, such as koalas, owls and frogs. The second project will improve fire extent and severity mapping to support post-fire recovery efforts and hazard reduction planning.

The selected projects will be delivered in partnership with universities and opportunities for peer review by the broader scientific community will be provided. Information and data from the projects will be made publically available.

Regional forums

Regional stakeholder forums will be held in September and early October to discuss the work of the program and seek community feedback. These forums are open to a wide range of stakeholders, such as community organisations, forest managers, industry groups,

research organisations, and local government agencies. A key topic for discussion will be the design of the Coastal IFOA monitoring program. The forums will be held in the North Coast (Port Macquarie and Grafton) and South Coast (Batemans Bay and Eden). Opportunities for other community members and stakeholders will also be provided via webinar or face-to-face forums.