

NSW Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program

Governance Charter

Version No: 2.1

Preamble

1. The Natural Resources Commission (the Commission) established the *NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee* (herein after referred to as the Committee).
2. The *NSW Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval* (CIFOA) conditions, approved in **November 2018** directs a monitoring steering committee to be established, chaired by the Natural Resources Commission to oversee the design, implementation, review and adaptive management of a monitoring program (cl. 122.1).
3. Under the NSW Regional Forest Agreements, NSW has agreed to develop and maintain a coordinated monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) plan. **In 2020**, the Committee endorsed a cross-agency MER plan based on jointly agreed scope with representatives from relevant Australian Government agencies.
4. The four *Private Native Forestry Codes of Practice* (PNF Codes), approved in **May 2022** directs the NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee (or equivalent), chaired by the Natural Resources Commission to oversee a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework for the PNF codes (4.3m [2]).

Aim

5. The Program delivers an authoritative evidence base for decision making on forest management.

Membership

6. The Committee must include:
 - i. the Commission as independent Chair
 - ii. a minimum of four independent and suitably qualified scientists that have demonstrated expertise in ecology, soil erosion and water quality/pollution, forest regeneration and Principles of Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management.
 - iii. a representative from the Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW)
 - iv. representatives from NSW Government agency responsible for programs relating to monitoring of the environment, including (but not limited to):
 - a. Department of Regional NSW, including the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Local Land Services and Crown Lands
 - b. Department of Planning and Environment, including the NSW Environment Protection (EPA) Authority and National Parks and Wildlife Service
7. The Commission can:
 - i. appoint other qualified experts or scientists to the committee.
 - ii. invite other NSW agencies as members to the committee.

Function

8. The Committee will meet general obligations and commitments where and when prescribed:
 - i. under *Chapter 8 – Monitoring Conditions* and *Protocol 38* of the CIFOA
 - ii. under *Section 4.3, cl. 1-3* and *Note 10* of the PNF Codes

- iii. under Cl. 8 of the NSW Regional Forest Agreements (specifically to coordinate and maintain a MER plan)
 - iv. the NSW Forest Management Framework
 - v. by Ministers
 - vi. by agreements with relevant agencies.
9. The Committee members will look for opportunities to align, complement, leverage existing datasets, indicators and programs to avoid duplication and gaps.
10. All members will ensure confidentiality of work in progress unless otherwise approved by the Committee.
11. The Committee can establish technical working groups to support functions set out in this charter. Technical Working Groups will be chaired by a representative of the Commission.

Roles

12. The NSW Natural Resources Commissioner is the Commission. The Commissioner may delegate the role.
13. The Commission, as a statutory independent agency provides advice or recommendations to Government in respect to functions set out in this charter. Final decisions will be made by the Commission, as independent chair within the Committee.
14. Agencies members will:
 - be represented by someone with adequate decision-making authority.
 - advocate for sufficient funding within their departments to meet Government obligations and commitments relevant to their policy area as set out in this charter.
 - ensure existing and new data is visible and accessible for sharing and public use (all information relating to PNF or private land will be managed consistent with Local Land Services privacy policy).
15. Relevant agencies must meet specific obligations and commitments prescribed to them in the functions set out in this charter, including approved monitoring plans.
16. Independent experts appointed to the Committee are responsible for providing strategic and technical advice to the Committee aligned to their qualifications and their thematic focus.
17. Committee members will review the effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling its function as prescribed in existing obligations and commitments and other milestones deemed significant by the Committee.
18. Committee members will identify any real or perceived conflicts of interests and inform the program secretariat in advance of each Steering Committee meeting.

Meetings

19. The Commission shall convene and chair the Committee meetings.
20. Meeting agendas, with attached meeting papers will be distributed at least three working days prior to the next scheduled meeting.
21. The Commission team will provide secretariate support.

Reporting

22. The Commission will report to:
 - i. authorising Ministers associated with functions set out in this charter.
 - ii. authorising agency heads associated with functions set out in this charter.
 - iii. other Ministers or agency heads that may arise with functions set out in this charter.

iv. the Premier.

Intellectual Property

23. Intellectual Property will rest with the commissioning agency unless otherwise agreed.

Version control		
1.0	Final - endorsed by the Steering Committee	14/02/19
1.1	Agency name changes after MOG and other minor amendments	15/04/19
1.2	Agency name changes after MOG Direction on meeting papers	08/10/20
2.0	Major revision and update after cross-tenure funding stream ceased	07/11/22
2.1	Updates to recognise ongoing role for RFA MER plan	21/07/23