

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Supplementary advice about a coastal IFOA

Purpose:

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) is to provide advice about how remapping and re-categorising of areas in State Forest may allow Government to meet its commitment to make a coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (IFOA) with no net change to wood supply and no erosion of environmental values. This will supplement NRC's previous advice about making a coastal IFOA.

Task:

Provide advice on whether Government could deploy new mapping data, methods and technology to more precisely identify, map and re-categorise old growth forests and rainforests in State Forests on the north coast. The NRC should provide advice on how more accurate mapping and re-categorisation may allow Government to meet its commitment to make a coastal IFOA with no net change to wood supply and no erosion of environmental values.

In delivering its advice, NRC should consider, within the limitations of time and available information:

- the definitions, method and accuracy of previous old growth and rainforest mapping and associated limitations,
- the impacts new protocols, mapping and land categorisation might have for native hardwood timber supply,
- any impacts this process might have for environmental values, including:
 - NSW's obligations under the Regional Forest Agreements and NSW Forest Agreements (including forest management zoning) to maintain a comprehensive adequate and representative reserve system,
 - the likelihood that areas not originally mapped as old growth or rainforest would now be identified as old growth or rainforest,
 - any impacts that have become apparent since the Regional Forest Agreements were signed,
- the level of confidence about the potential impacts of this process on timber supply and environmental values,
- any technical, administrative, policy or legislative constraints of using new or existing data, methods and technology.

If considered necessary or desirable, NRC should also comment on options to increase the level of confidence in the maps and categorisation of land.

Scope of advice:

In formulating its advice, NRC may also consider any materials it considers relevant, including:

- the results of desktop and field assessments of sites that may be 'over-mapped' or 'under-mapped' for old growth or rainforest
- input NRC requests from the Department of Primary Industries-Forestry, Forestry Corporation of NSW, the Office of Environment and Heritage (including its Native Vegetation Information Science Branch) and the Environment Protection Authority.

Timeframes:

NRC should provide its advice to the Premier, the Minister for Lands and Forestry and the Minister for Environment as soon as possible. DPC may request NRC to provide additional supplementary advice, based on further desktop and field assessments.

Confidentiality:

All information presented to NRC, as well as its advice, should be treated as Cabinet-in-Confidence unless determined otherwise by the Premier.