



## Fact sheet: Reassessing old growth mapping on coastal state forests

In November 2018, the Premier asked the Natural Resources Commission (the Commission) to independently oversee a program to reassess old growth forest mapping on coastal state forests. The Commission is working with the Environment, Energy and Science Group's (EES) Science Division, within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to develop an assessment and decision making framework.

### What are old growth forests?

Old growth forests are ecologically mature forests where the effects of disturbance are now negligible.

This is a nationally agreed definition that has been in place since 1997.

### Why reassess old growth forest mapping?

There are significant errors in current old growth forest mapping on state forests.<sup>1</sup>

Rezoning incorrectly mapped forest could allow these areas to be harvested. If localised impacts on wood supply arise from new settings in the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval, rezoning a small proportion of incorrectly mapped forest could address any verified shortfall in supply<sup>1</sup>.

This would maintain the NSW Government's twin commitments for no net change in wood supply and no erosion in environmental values.

### The project will:

- Identify, map and protect old growth forest, including unmapped old growth forest
- Identify areas of incorrectly mapped old growth that could be rezoned
- Field verify all areas of incorrectly mapped old growth ahead of any decision on rezoning
- Only reassess a small proportion of old growth mapping to address a verified wood supply shortfall – other mapped areas that aren't already old growth will transition to mature forests in time
- Protect site and landscape environmental values and maintain reserve targets

### The project will not:

- Lead to old growth forest being harvested
- Reassess rainforest mapping or lead to rainforest being harvested
- Reassess old growth mapping in national parks or on private land

1. NRC (2018) *Supplementary Advice on Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval Remake*.

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### Community consultation

In **August 2019** the Commission will consult the community on the proposed assessment and decision making framework to reassess old growth forest mapping.

The Commission will provide the proposed assessment and decision making framework to the NSW Government in **November 2019**. The Commission will consult the community on proposed areas to be reassessed.

### If the framework is adopted by the NSW Government:

The Commission and the EES Science Division will reassess and remap old growth areas over three years.

For incorrectly mapped old growth forest to be rezoned, it would need to:

- not contain old growth; **and**
- not contain special environmental or conservation values, including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage; **and**
- be linked to a verified wood supply shortfall; **and then**
- if part of a listing on the State Heritage Register, be considered by the Heritage Council of NSW and Minister responsible for the *Heritage Act 1977*; **and then**
- have protections revoked by the NSW Parliament.

### Stay informed

For more information about the project or to sign up to our mailing list, visit the Commission's web site:

<https://www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/old-growth>

