



CHANGES TO NSW LOGGING RULES in OUR PUBLIC FORESTS

The NSW Government has introduced radical new rules that regulate logging: the **Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (CIFOA)** come into effect from July 2019.

These new logging rules will apply to all the State Forests on the NSW North Coast, from the Hunter to the Queensland border and west to the New England Tablelands. They are designed to increase wood supply from North Coast forests. The increased supply comes at the expense of the environmental values of our native forests.

Those values sustain complex ecosystems of globally significant biodiversity, the web of life which provides habitat for flora and fauna, many rare and endangered species, clean water, soil protection, climate protection through carbon capture, and human enjoyment, are dismissed in favour of wood supply.

Many of the important environmental protections of the past have been removed. There is even a proposal to allow logging of currently protected old-growth zones, reducing the extent of the forest reserve network.

SOME KEY POINTS WHICH HIGHLIGHT THESE DAMAGING CHANGES AFFECTING NORTH COAST FORESTS ARE:

- **Logging is dramatically intensified between Taree and Grafton through the creation of an 'intensive harvesting zone'.** This will closely resemble current logging in Eden to feed the woodchip mill. The new CIFOA appears to be an effort to obtain as much wood in as short a timeframe as possible. This is to be achieved by clear felling - removing large areas of entire ecosystems rather than selective logging.
- All areas outside the 'intensive harvesting zone', will still be subject to much more intensive logging that was previously allowed.
- **The maximum size of legal clear felling under the old forestry rules was 0.25 hectares. The new rules allow for clearing of 45ha – 60 hectares, a 180-fold intensification of logging.** Before, trees smaller than 20cm were to be left to grow on. Now they can all be removed. This is a change of policy to prioritise extraction over conservation.
- **No effort was made to assess the environmental impact of the last 20 years of logging** at ever increasing intensity.
- **In 2016 the government made a dual commitment to (1) no reduction in wood supply and (2) no erosion of environmental values.** The Natural Resources Commission (the independent scientific advisor to government) determined that it was **"not possible to meet the Government's commitments around both environmental values and wood supply"**. Guess which got the short straw?
- **To make up timber shortfalls, the Natural Resources Commission recommended the 'remapping and rezoning' of old-growth and rainforest.** This means reducing the extent of the forest reserve network – supposed to be permanent - to access timber.
- **Previous federal / state principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development and Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management have been blatantly discarded.** The result will be

a rapid loss of biodiversity and a rapid increase of single species, single age forest, described by former head of the EPA as 'pseudo-plantations' with conservation areas left in small 'clumps' with no permanent protection.

- **Giant trees up to 160cm will be allowed to be logged.** These are giant old growth trees. They are hundreds of years old. Many survived previous logging because they were left as Habitat trees. Under the new rules there is no requirement to leave Habitat and Recruitment Habitat trees across the area being logged. Between 2 and 3 million of the largest remaining trees will now have no protection and be 'in the way' of young regrowth. This is in direct contravention of the government's own scientific advice that says removing big old trees threatens the survival of many animal species who depend on the hollows, that form after 100 years or so, to shelter and breed.
- **Most headwater stream buffers at the top of the catchment, are reduced from 10 metres to 5 metres.** Many areas that have been protected for twenty years are now open to logging – counter to recommendations from scientists.
- **The new laws are a fundamental shift from the past twenty years of management and remove the need to survey prior to logging to try and identify threatened species that are present and take mitigating action.** There is no data to support these changes.
- **There are no requirements to search for Koalas prior to logging in the North East NSW forests.** They will only need to be searched for in southern NSW where they are almost extinct. Koalas will die in logging operations just to save money.
- **Where Koalas are predicted to occur** only a small number of small diameter trees (5-10 per hectare) will have to be retained for koalas.
- **There are plans for wood, particularly from the intensive logging zone, to be used to feed wood-fired power stations.** Burning North Coast forests for electricity was proposed by the NSW Department of Primary Industries in December 2017. This will almost certainly include supplying overseas markets in Japan and other countries. Wood chipping and pelletising wood as fuel for furnaces to produce electricity is destructive and will be bad for forests and the climate.
- **Native forests act as important carbon sinks extracting CO2 from the atmosphere. Wood is not a renewable carbon neutral source of energy. Per unit of energy wood produces more CO2 than coal when burnt.** Despite logging industry assertions, wood is **not** the renewable energy source it is claimed to be. The production and consumption of biofuels and the burning of biomass releases carbon dioxide. This is especially the case for the rapidly expanding wood-fired power stations where the CO2 released is somewhere between 10 and 80% higher than burning coal per unit of electricity produced.

Saving forests *is* climate action!

Forests are the most effective technology known to counter runaway planetary heating.

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Further information can be found at –

No Electricity from Forests (NEFF): <https://www.facebook.com/neffaction/>

National Parks Association NSW (NPANSW): www.npansw.org/npa/campaigns; Nature Conservation

Council (NCC): www.nature.org.au; Australian Forest and Climate

Alliance (AFCA): www.forestsandclimate.org.au.

North East Forest Alliance (NEFA): www.nefa.org.au

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