



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-2022**

### **Supplementary Questions**

**Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Customer Service and Natural Resources**

**AGRICULTURE AND WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Hearing 15 March 2022

**Answers due by: 11 April 2022**

**Budget Estimates secretariat**

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## AGRICULTURE AND WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES

### Questions from Mark Buttigieg MLC *(on behalf of the Opposition)*

#### Morpeth Train Station

1. In a building inspection report that was completed on 24 May 2011, termite barrier treatment was identified as one of seven 'urgent matters'. Has termite barrier treatment been carried out at the site?
  - (a) If so, how many times has the site been treated?
  - (b) On what dates?
  - (c) Who was responsible for the cost of the treatment?
  - (d) What was the cost?
  - (e) Was there a recommendation for another treatment to be undertaken?
  - (f) If so, when
  - (g) Has this been conducted?
  - (h) If not, why not?

#### ANSWER

Staff who commissioned the report have since resigned or retired over the past 11 years – report determined building was not suitable for intended use as office. No record of further works has been located.

2. In a building inspection report that was completed on 24 May 2011, electrical inspection was listed as one of seven 'urgent matters'. Has an electrical inspection been conducted on site?
  - (a) If so, how many times has the site been inspected?
    - i. On what dates?
    - ii. Was there any work recommended when the electrician attended?
    - iii. If so, what was the cost of the electrical work and who was responsible for the cost of the works?

#### ANSWER

Staff who commissioned the report have since resigned or retired over the past 11 years – report determined building was not suitable for intended use as office. No record of further works has been located.

3. The building inspection report identified that surface water drainage of the site was inadequate. What works have been conducted to resolve this issue?
  - (a) Has a Plumbing/hydraulic inspection been conducted?
    - i. On what dates?
    - ii. Was there any work recommended when the plumber attended and has this been completed?
    - iii. If so, what was the cost of the plumbing/drainage work and who was responsible for the cost?

**ANSWER**

Staff who commissioned the report have since resigned or retired over the past 11 years – report determined building was not suitable for intended use as office. No record of further works has been located.

4. Was access provided to the sub floor and a reinspect conducted prior to acting on the 24 May 2011 report?
- (a) If so, when was access provided?
    - i. Who provided access?
    - ii. If not, why not?

**ANSWER**

Staff who commissioned the report have since resigned or retired over the past 11 years – report determined building was not suitable for intended use as office. No record of further works has been located.

5. Have repairs to the ceiling lining and investigations into water stains been conducted?
- (a) If so, when?
  - (b) And what was the cost of repairs?
  - (c) If not, why not?
    - i. When will ceiling repairs and investigations be conducted?
    - ii. When will the interior be repainted?

**ANSWER**

Staff who commissioned the report have since resigned or retired over the past 11 years – report determined building was not suitable for intended use as office. No record of further works has been located.

6. What plumbing works have been undertaken in the female toilet
- (a) When were works in the female toilet conducted?
  - (b) Is the female toilet currently functional on the site?
  - (c) Are there other toilets onsite that are broken or are leaking?
  - (d) Did a plumber attend to the leaking toilet pipework as identified in the building inspection report?

**ANSWER**

Staff who commissioned the report have since resigned or retired over the past 11 years – report determined building was not suitable for intended use as office. No record of further works has been located.

7. Does the property now have smoke alarms present?
- (a) If so, when were they fitted and how many smoke alarms are onsite?
  - (b) If not, why not?

- (c) And when will smoke alarms be installed?

**ANSWER**

No smoke alarms are present. The building report indicated it was not fit for its intended purpose resulting in no further investment onsite.

8. A contract was awarded on 3 December 2021 for the upgrade of Robert Street Morpeth Soil Conservation Services depot storage and hardstand areas. Has the project commenced?
- (a) If not, why not?
- i. When will it commence?

**ANSWER**

There was no construction contract was awarded on 3 December 2021

9. The target finish date for the upgrade was listed as 10 June 2022. Will the target finish date be met?
- (a) If not, what is the expected finish date?
- (b) And why has it been delayed?

**ANSWER**

No, the upgrade has been delayed, we are awaiting both civil and structural engineer reports which are required for the tender process. The commencement date is dependent upon the tender outcome.

10. What will be the scope of works conducted?
- (a) What is the estimated cost?

**ANSWER**

Demolition of some fuel storage and existing infrastructure; providing additional hardstand area to store Soil Conservation Services equipment; upgrade electrical mains for the site; carport/vehicle storage; stormwater upgrades. Estimated cost at \$300,000.

11. Who is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the building and lands at the old Morpeth Railway Station?
- (a) What maintenance budget is available for the upkeep of the site?
- (b) How much has been spent on maintenance for each financial year from 2011?

**ANSWER**

Soil Conservation Service is the Reserve Trust Manager. Information on maintenance costs for the site is not available.

12. How often is the grass maintained?
- (a) Who maintains it?
- (b) When will plants overgrowing around the station be trimmed?

## **ANSWER**

The Soil Conservation Service maintains the grass and plants on an as needs basis in line with seasonal conditions.

13. When will the broken windows near the toilet on the left hand side of the building and the one at the front of the building be replaced?

## **ANSWER**

The window has been boarded to prevent further vandalism.

14. There is a flag pole, but no flag on the building, when will it be replaced?

## **ANSWER**

There is no current plan to replace the flag.

15. When will the exterior be repainted?

## **ANSWER**

The exterior will be painted on an as needs basis in keeping with the current use of the building.

16. When was the last site survey conducted?

## **ANSWER**

A building conditions report was undertaken in 2011. There has been no site survey since this time.

17. Will funding be provided by the NSW Government to restore the rundown Morpeth station and give it a new life as a community asset?

## **ANSWER**

Questions about the future use of the site should be directed to Crown Lands.

18. Will the State Government enter into negotiations with the community, to consider a proposal, and strategy, to manage and look after the facility?
- (a) If so, when?
- (b) If not, why not?

## **ANSWER**

Questions about the future use of the site should be directed to Crown Lands.

### **Travelling Stock Reserves Plan of Management**

19. The TSR Plan of Management states that 10 collaborative projects with First Nations communities will be undertaken (one per region).
- (a) What budget has been allocated to this?

- (b) How many projects have been completed, and can a list be provided, including the outcomes they have achieved?
- (c) If projects haven't been completed, what is the timeframe for completion?

## ANSWER

- a) \$163,480 allocated for nine of the projects, with one project budget still being finalised.
- b) A list of the five regional projects that have been completed and details of the outcomes achieved is outlined in the table below.

Region	Project Name	Project Outcomes	Budget
North Coast	Lawrence TSR Cultural Burn	The aim of the burn was to re-connect the traditional owners and Yaegl people to country through cultural activity and build the capacity of Yaegl people. The burn was one of several activities the Yaegl Traditional Owners Senior Land Management Team undertook on Reserves on Yaegl Country. (Other activities include bush regeneration, mapping and protecting habitat trees and cultural sites, installing and monitoring nest boxes, and emu tracking.)	\$10,500
Western	Control of Priority Weeds on Bourke Crown Reserves 2021/2022	Removal of the Boxthorn is necessary to prevent the spread and further impact. Contracting Aboriginal people to remove the Boxthorn, access to country is facilitated and the restoration of the natural system. REDIE were contracted to conduct inspections and treatment of weeds.	\$9,080
Central Tablelands	Garra Repatriation	LLS has partnered with Orange and Molong Aboriginal Organisations and community groups and Heritage NSW to repatriate ancestral remains to Garra TSR and protect and preserve these burial sites and a carved tree. In addition, LLS partnered with LaTrobe University to document Wiradjuri burial practices for the community to preserve knowledge.	\$5,500
Hunter	Wurringuy TSR Demonstration Cultural Burn	The outcome was to reintroduce Cultural Burning to the Wurringuy TSR and demonstrate its use as a Land Management Tool to the local private landholders.	\$11,000
Northern Tablelands	Enhancing and Protecting Conservation Values of TSRs	Banbai Aboriginal Group planted trees on two TSRs near Guyra. ACH Assessment on TSR, Cultural Fire Burn at TSR near Inverell with Inverell Aniawan Aboriginal Group, men's group & Githabul Rangers. Installation of koala	\$47,400

Region	Project Name	Project Outcomes	Budget
		drinking stations and nest boxes.	

(c) Another five projects are yet to be completed. Below is a list of the proposed projects and budgets. These projects are expected to be completed by 2024.

Region	Proposed Project Name	Budget
Riverina	Piloting Aboriginal Land Management Agreement in the Riverina Highlands	\$25,000
Central West	Wallwan Traditional Owners, in partnership with CWLLS and, have engaged the local RFS to undertake a Cultural burn on the Warren TSR	\$5,000
North West	Protection of cultural sites at Borah Crossing Reserve for education and ceremony purposes	To be finalised
South East	Undertake ACH assessments on TSRs in the Queanbeyan Palerang area.	\$35,000
Murray	Co-management of Dights Hill TSR with the Albury LALC	\$15,000

20. The TSR Plan of Management includes indicators relating to more interpretative sites explaining the historical importance of TSR's to First Nations People; more First Nation peoples engaged and employed in TSR management; more sites showcasing where First Nations Peoples' cultural heritage and travelling stock co-exist; and cultural burning practices on more TSR's:

- How much has been budgeted for each of these initiatives?
- What progress and outcomes have been achieved to date?
- Can a list of all projects completed be provided?

## ANSWER

- The LLS regions allocate budget for these projects based on permit revenue. See the table below for regional allocations.
- Below is a list of the 5 completed projects outcomes that have been achieved to date.
- Below is a list of the 5 projects that have been completed to date.

Region	Project Name	Project Outcomes	Budget
North Coast	Lawrence TSR Cultural Burn	The prime aim of the burn was to re-connect the traditional owners and Yaegl people to country through cultural activity and build the capacity of Yaegl people. The burn was one of several activities that the Yaegl Traditional Owners Senior Land Management Team undertook on Reserves on Yaegl Country. (Other activities include bush regeneration, mapping and protecting habitat trees and cultural sites, installing and monitoring nest boxes, and emu tracking.)	\$10,500
Western	Control of Priority Weeds on Bourke	Removal of the Boxthorn is necessary to prevent the spread and	\$9,080

Region	Project Name	Project Outcomes	Budget
	Crown Reserves 2021/2022	further impact. By contracting Aboriginal people to remove the Boxthorn, access to country is facilitated and the restoration of the natural system. REDI.E were contracted to conduct inspections and treatment of weeds.	
Central Tablelands	Garra Repatriation	LLS have partnered with Orange and Molong Aboriginal Organisations and community groups and Heritage NSW to repatriate ancestral remains to Garra TSR and protect and preserve these burial sites and a carved tree. In addition, we partnered with LaTrobe University to document Wiradjuri burial practices for the community to preserve knowledge.	\$5,500
Hunter	Wuppinguy TSR Demonstration Cultural Burn	The outcome was to reintroduce Cultural Burning to the Wuppinguy TSR and demonstrate its use as a Land Management Tool to the local private landholders.	\$11,000
Northern Tablelands	Enhancing and Protecting Conservation Values of TSRs	Banbai Aboriginal Group planted trees on two TSRs near Guyra. ACH Assessment on TSR, Cultural Fire Burn at TSR near Inverell with Inverell Anaiwan Aboriginal Group, men's group & Githabul Rangers. Installation of koala drinking stations & Nest Boxes.	\$47,400

### Floods and Forestry Operations

21. What has been the impact of the recent devastating floods on the NSW forest estate?

- (a) What impact have the recent devastating floods had on the harvesting and processing operations of the NSW forest estate?

#### ANSWER

The primary impact of floods is on roads, access and ground conditions, not standing trees.

- (a) Forestry operations in some areas were suspended at the height of the weather event. Ground conditions continue to limit access and operations.

22. What is the expected shortfall in timber supply that was previously under contract through Forestry Corporation?

#### ANSWER

The primary impact of floods is on roads, access and ground conditions, not standing trees. The trees in areas impacted by flooding remain available for harvesting. Wood supply



agreements have annual commitments and this will not be reconciled until the end of financial year.

23. What assistance is the NSW Government providing to sawmills impacted by recent floods?

#### **ANSWER**

The Department of Primary Industries remains in close contact with affected industry participants to ascertain short and longer term needs while the NSW Government continues to roll out immediate disaster relief measures.

Measures include assistance to the 57 affected local government areas in NSW through joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Primary producers recovering from the devastating impacts of floods are already receiving vital support, with Special Disaster Grants of up to \$75,000 now available.

Flood affected primary producers may apply for Special Disaster Grants to access financial assistance to get back operating as soon as possible. Once approved, eligible primary producers can access \$15,000 in assistance up-front, with a further \$60,000 in financial assistance available thereafter upon submission of valid tax invoices.

There are several types of Natural Disaster Assistance currently available to LGAs affected by a declared natural disaster. Further details and eligibility criteria are available via the RAA website at:

[www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance).

24. Will there be any NSW Government assistance or support specific to the timber industry?

#### **ANSWER**

See the response to question 23. The Department of Primary Industries will remain in close contact with key industry participants over the coming weeks and months to ensure that the specific needs of the timber industry are addressed.

25. When is Forestry Corporation expecting to resume full harvesting operations?

#### **ANSWER**

Operations will continue to be managed in line with ongoing weather and conditions in the forest.

26. Is there salvageable timber available?

- (a) If yes, what is the process for having the timber salvaged across the flood-affected areas of the NSW forest estate?
- (b) To what extent will the Environmental Protection Agency be involved in this process?

#### **ANSWER**

The floods have not impacted the standing timber and this will be able to be harvested in line with usual practices once the weather improves and the ground dries out.

### **NSW Forestry Corporation**

27. What is the process for renegotiating and extending the Forestry Corporation Wood Supply Agreements (WSAs) that are due to expire in 2023?

- (a) Is this process currently underway?
- (b) When is the contract negotiation process expected to conclude?

**ANSWER**

The North Coast WSAs are not being renegotiated, they are being extended. Correspondence detailing the process and timeframe for extending Wood Supply Agreements for sawlogs on the north coast that expire in 2023 has been tabled in the Legislative Council in response to Question on Notice 8281.

- (a) Yes.
- (b) This is detailed in the correspondence referred to above.

28. What will be the duration of the new WSAs?

**ANSWER**

These are not new WSAs, they are extensions of existing agreements. It is proposed to extend the existing WSAs to 2028.

29. What consultation has been conducted with the timber industry and relevant stakeholders regarding the renegotiation of the new WSAs?

**ANSWER**

WSAs are not being renegotiated, they are being extended. Forestry Corporation wrote to all relevant WSA holders in late 2021 advising them of the intention to extend the WSAs and continues to have discussions.

30. Will all sawmills be offered the same amount of timber supply as currently contracted under their existing WSAs?

**ANSWER**

Yes, the extended contracts are expected to have the same volumes as the current contracts.

31. Will Forestry Corporation continue to make available the same total annual volume of hardwood sawlogs beyond 2023?

**ANSWER**

For the North Coast, the contract extensions will cover the same volume of timber currently under contract through to 2028.

**National Forest Industries Plan**

32. Was the NSW Government consulted prior to the Australian Government's announcement of \$86 million of funding to support the establishment of new forest plantations?

- (a) What discussions, if any, has the NSW Government had with the Australian Government regarding the National Forest Industries Plan?
- (b) Does the NSW Government have any plans to access the \$86 million of federal funding for the establishment of new forest plantations?

- (c) How much of the \$86 million of federal funding for the establishment of new forest plantations will be available to NSW?
- (d) How much will the NSW Government have to contribute in order to access the \$86 million of federal funding for the establishment of new forest plantations?
- (e) Is any potential NSW Government co-contribution to the \$86 million of federal funding for new forest plantations able to be provided from Forestry Corporation?
- (f) Can the \$86 million of federal funding for the establishment of new forest plantations be used for purchases of land, or is it for establishment costs only?
- (g) What establishment costs are covered by the \$86 million of federal funding for the establishment of new forest plantations?
- (h) What other costs are covered by the \$86 million of federal funding for the establishment of new forest plantations?
- (i) Can existing NSW Government commitments of funding for new plantations be counted as part of any NSW Government co-contribution?
- (j) If a new forest plantation is established under the federal funding program, will it still be eligible for registration under the Emissions Reduction Fund?

## **ANSWER**

Issues relating to the Commonwealth Government's funding announcement to support the establishment of new plantations remain under active consideration by the NSW Government.

### **NSW Forest Estate**

33. What is the NSW Government doing to grow the state's forest plantation estate?

## **ANSWER**

The 2019/20 bushfires affected approximately 25 per cent of timber plantations managed by Forestry Corporation and replanting will require substantial investment over many years. Forestry Corporation has commenced an accelerated replanting program and is tracking ahead of its schedule to fully restock fire-affected plantations by 2027. This program will see Forestry Corporation invest around \$41 million a year in replanting.

The NSW Government has supported this investment by injecting \$46 million equity in Forestry Corporation to support fire recovery, with around \$28 million of this allocated to replanting. An additional \$22.6 million, being the balance of the \$24 million four-year fund announced by the NSW Government in FY18 to purchase private land to expand the plantation estate, has also been redirected to replanting efforts.

Forestry Corporation production nurseries in Tumut and Grafton have been expanded and record numbers of seedlings have been planted statewide. Approximately 16 million softwood and hardwood seedlings were planted in the 2021 planting season, well above the target of 14 million and up from around 10 million in a normal year.

Other measures aimed at growing the plantation estate in NSW include fee waivers for new plantation authorisations (for five years from August 2020) as a bushfire recovery measure, along with the maintenance of environmental standards by DPI Forestry through the process of assessment, authorisations, monitoring and audit. DPI Forestry also provides advice on the suitability of land for plantation authorisation pre and post purchase.

The NSW Government will continue to look at opportunities to expand the plantation footprint.

34. Does the NSW Government have a goal to grow the state's softwood plantation estate?

(a) If yes, by how much, and by when?

**ANSWER**

The NSW Government is committed to growing the NSW plantation estate and contributing to the Commonwealth Government's "Growing a better Australia" policy.

35. Is the current softwood plantation estate in NSW sufficient to meet our future timber needs?

**ANSWER**

Australia a net importer of wood products. The NSW softwood plantation estate provides a proportion of timber for Australia's needs and is managed to supply a long-term non-declining yield of timber. Timber is also sourced domestically from hardwood plantations, native forests and overseas. Softwood plantations do not meet the need for hardwood products, which have different properties, are used for different products and cannot easily be substituted.

36. Has the NSW Government completed any analysis to determine the supply/demand gap for timber, and are there any plans to address it?

(a) Is the NSW Government aware of any work done by industry to model the supply/demand gap?

(b) If yes, how is the NSW Government working with industry to address these issues?

**ANSWER**

Issues relating to Australia being a net importer of timber and forecasts of increasing domestic demand over coming years have been well ventilated through recent Commonwealth and NSW Parliamentary Inquiries, complemented by research from bodies such as ABARES and others. Accordingly, Commonwealth and State Governments, including the NSW Government, have been seeking to address this issue through successive measures directed at expanding the plantation estate, such as the Commonwealth's 'one billion trees' commitment and the NSW Government measures outlined in response to Question 33 above.

37. Of the 7,300 hectares of land for softwood plantations that Forestry Corporation has acquired since December 2016, how much has been developed for forest plantations?

**ANSWER**

Forestry Corporation has planted all but 87 hectares of the land it has acquired and added to the softwood plantation estate since 2016. This remaining area is scheduled for planting in 2024, after other fire-impacted plantations are re-established.

38. Has any land owned by Forestry Corporation been identified for renewable energy infrastructure under the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021?

- (a) Has any productive and substituted land been identified as required by the legislation?

**ANSWER**

No. A registration of interest process has commenced to identify potential opportunities.

39. How much land has been purchased through the NSW Government's 2018 \$24 million dollar fund to expand the NSW forest plantation estate?

- (a) How much of the fund has been expended on purchasing land?  
(b) How much of the fund has been expended on establishing new forest plantations?  
(c) How much of the fund has been expended to replant existing forest plantations?

**ANSWER**

633.5 hectares.

- (a) \$1,405,887.  
(b) Funding was provided only for the purchase of land. Given the 2019-20 fire impact, in 2020, Treasury approved the reallocation of the balance of the funding for re-establishing fire-affected plantations.  
(c) \$22.6 million.

**NSW Forestry Hubs**

40. Does the NSW Government have any representation or formal or informal involvement with the four Australian Government "Forestry Hubs" operating across NSW forests and forest industries?

**ANSWER**

The Forestry Corporation of NSW is represented on the NSW Forestry Hubs as the manager of the Crown forestry estate. NSW Government agencies, such as Regional NSW, have regular engagement with the Hubs on issues of mutual interest. This includes awareness of common research aims and objectives in order to avoid duplication of effort.

**Redirection of NSW Timber Exports**

41. What is the total current cost of the NSW Government's program to redirect 270,000 tonnes of timber exports to the domestic market?

- (a) What was the estimated budget of the program?  
(b) Is the current total cost of the program consistent with the estimated program budget?  
(c) Who has responsibility for overseeing this program?  
(d) How much timber has been redirected to date?  
(e) Of the timber that has been redirected to the domestic market, where has it been directed and for what purpose?  
(f) Which NSW sawmills have received this redirected timber?

- i. How much did each sawmill receive?
- (g) What freight support is the NSW Government providing to facilitate the transportation of timber across the state under this program?
- (h) Are there any plans to expand and/or continue the program?
- (i) In answers provided in response to supplementary questions following the Budget Estimates hearing on 3 November 2021, the Minister advised that the program to redirect NSW timber exports to the domestic market “has ensured that additional quality timber supplies are available for mills in NSW”. How was the estimate of “quality” established?
- (j) What grades of timber will be available under this program?
- (k) Will mills in Oberon and Bathurst be eligible for this program?
  - i. If not, why not?

## **ANSWER**

Current cost incurred is \$2.5M.

- (a) The direction provided \$3.65M.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) Forestry Corporation.
- (d) 12,961 tonnes at the end of February 2022.
- (e) Bushfire impacted region of Tumut/Tumbarumba primarily for structural timber.
- (f) AKD and Hyne.
  - i. AKD had received 7,507 tonnes by the end of February. Hyne had received 5,453 by end of February.
- (g) There is no direct freight subsidy. Funding will assist with cost recovery of infrastructure and transition to rail.
- (h) This has not been considered.
- (i) Quality timber refers to sawlog within the current sawmill’s specification.
- (j) Sawlog.
- (k) No.
  - i. The directive was specifically targeted to the bushfire impacted areas of Tumut/Tumbarumba that had their available supply reduced by over 50 per cent. Oberon/Bathurst were not impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires and have therefore not experienced reduced supply volumes.

## **NSW Timber Exports**

42. How much timber is Forestry Corporation currently exporting?

- (a) Which countries is the timber being exported to?
- (b) Which international ports is the timber being exported to?
- (c) What grade of timber is being exported?

## **ANSWER**

Approximately 170,000 tonnes per annum of softwood logs not usable by local mills. India, South Korea and Vietnam.

Forestry Corporation manages these exports via a third party. The ports are generally understood to be Candela, Pusan and Ho Chi Minh.

Pulp grade logs, oversize sawlogs and low grade logs.

## Softwood Transport Assistance Program

43. Is NSW Government participating in the Softwood Transport Assistance Program?

(a) If not, why?

### ANSWER

The NSW Government's participation in the Softwood Transport Assistance Program remains under active consideration.

44. Have any timber mills in NSW conveyed their interest to the NSW Government in accessing the Kangaroo Island timber?

### ANSWER

A small number of NSW timber mills have conveyed interest in accessing the timber.

45. What is the NSW Government doing to support NSW timber mills to access additional resources so they can retain workers and continue to produce essential timber for the housing market?

### ANSWER

Since the 2019/20 bushfires, the Government has continued to support the salvage of timber where possible from fire-affected areas and drive accelerated replanting programs. The salvage harvesting effort has been complemented by the NSW Government's \$46 million equity injection to Forestry Corporation to support re-establishing plantations, expanding production nurseries to increase seedling production and repairing infrastructure and roads damaged by fire.

In August 2021 the former Deputy Premier issued a direction to Forestry Corporation to divert selected softwood log exports to domestic markets over the next three years. That direction will result in an additional 270,000 tonnes of timber entering the domestic supply chain.

Other actions from the NSW Government to support the timber industry (including addressing timber shortages) have included:

- \$41.8 million in approved Bushfire Industry Recovery Package sector development grants
- \$10 million for haulage of fire-affected timber and \$15 million for storage assistance (with complementary Commonwealth assistance). NSW successfully negotiated a one-year extension with the Commonwealth for haulage subsidy claims (now expiring June 2022)
- Low interest loans from the Forest Industries Innovation Fund (including an increase in the loan cap from \$3 million to \$5 million)
- Exploration of alternative timber supplies for domestic needs in NSW (including timber previously exported)
- Diversion of harvesting efforts from native forests to hardwood plantations to maintain a level of supply while forests recover from the fires
- Working closely with the NSW EPA to ensure harvesting could continue in native

- forests, appropriately at reduced levels, under site specific operating conditions
- Sourcing alternate opportunities for native forest harvesting and haulage contractors while native forests recovered including work in burnt softwood haulage, and hazard reduction work in National Parks following bushfires
  - Actively promoting the expansion of private native forestry

#### **NSW Forest Industries Innovation Fund**

46. How much of the \$34 million NSW Forest Industries Innovation Fund loan scheme has been expended?

(a) To whom have the loans been awarded?

#### **ANSWER**

Since launching the FIIF loan scheme in October 2018, 10 applications for 9 projects have been approved totalling \$20.337 million.

A successful Pentarch Logistics Pty Ltd project proposal involving the design, installation and commissioning of a briquette plant to compress and package high-value wood fiber products from forestry processing residues and waste was publicly announced late in 2019. All other applications and projects remain commercial-in-confidence.



## AGRICULTURE

### Questions from the Hon Emma Hurst MLC

#### Sharks

47. After the fatal shark incident on 16 February 2022, what steps were taken by DPI? Were any additional SMART drumlines or shark nets put up within the vicinity of the incident - if so, how many and where?

#### ANSWER

On Wednesday, 16 February at about 4:30pm, some rock fishers observed and filmed a large shark repeatedly bite a male ocean swimmer, 35 years of age off Little Bay Beach, Sydney. The NSW Police, Westpac helicopter and Surf Life Saving NSW attended the scene. DPI was notified of the incident by Surf Life Saving and NSW Police. Based on footage provided by the public DPI shark biologists believe that a White Shark, at least 3 metres in length, was likely responsible.

On the morning of 17 February, DPI officers deployed 6 SMART drumlines from the southern end of Little Bay Beach up to the middle of Malabar Beach/Long Bay to catch, tag and relocate any sharks in the area. The DPI Fisheries vessel, the Solitary Ranger, and two other Fisheries vessels were on patrol to assist with monitoring the drumlines and to provide assistance as required by the Shark Incident Response Team.

All beaches in the Sutherland, Randwick and Waverley areas were closed by their respective councils on 16 February for 24 hours consistent with Surf Life Saving NSW's standard operating procedures. The organisers of the Australian titles surf boat carnival, which was due to start on the afternoon of 17 February at Cronulla Beach, discussed the incident with the DPI Shark Incident Response Team and decided to postpone the event until 18 February. Surf Life Saving NSW provided drones and on water assets to monitor for sharks in the event area.

15 SMART drumlines continued to be deployed in the area from Bondi to Little Bay Beach from 17-27 February by DPI Fisheries. DPI continued to work with the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program, Bite Club, Surfing NSW and Surf Life Saving NSW to provide information about mental health services and the NSW Shark Management Program to local communities over the weekend of 26-27 February.

48. With the installation of 170 SMART drumlines as a part of the new Shark Management strategy, will location maps of the gears' approximate locations be made publicly available?

#### ANSWER

Information about the 2021/22 Shark Management Program, including maps of the locations of SMART drumlines, is publicly available on the SharkSmart website:  
<https://www.sharksmart.nsw.gov.au>

49. Will catch statistics on SMART drumlines be made publicly available through annual reporting, like the Shark Meshing Program?

## ANSWER

Catches of target sharks (being White, Tiger and Bull sharks) on SMART drumlines are reported immediately after release on the SharkSmart app. Catch data from the SMART drumlines will be made publicly available on the SharkSmart website once it has been through the standard QA/QC process.

50. Has the DPI undertaken any research on how long it takes animals to recover from being hooked by a SMART drumline, and whether different species have difference outcomes? If so, please share this research.

## ANSWER

NSW DPI has conducted a number of studies looking at stress and survival associated with the capture process and post-release movements of white, tiger and bull sharks after capture. The capture process was deemed relatively benign on the physiological response of white sharks to capture, and survival rates were considerably higher than those found in a shark longline fishery off the NSW Coast

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- Lipscombe, R. S., Spaet, J. L., Scott, A., Lam, C. H., Brand, C. P., & Butcher, P. A. 2020. Habitat use and movement patterns of tiger sharks (*Galeocerdo cuvier*) in eastern Australian waters. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 77: 3127-3137. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsaa212>
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51. How much has the DPI spent on SMART drumline programs each year? Can you provide the figures for the past 5 years?

## ANSWER

<u>Financial year</u>	<u>Contractor fees</u>	<u>Comments on extent of SMART drumlines</u>
16/17	\$1,286,237	Ballina & Evans Head year-round

17/18	\$1,915,193	Ballina & Evans Head year-round; 6-month trials at Coffs Harbour, Forster, Kiama and Ulladulla;
18/19	\$2,296,868	Ballina & Evans Head year-round; 3 month trials at Newcastle, Manly and Palm Beach; 2-month trials at Tathra and Pambula
19/20	\$1,203,719	Ballina & Evans Head year-round; 3 month trials at Newcastle, Manly and Palm Beach
20/21	\$950,309	Ballina & Evans Head year-round

52. How much has the DPI spent on shark-net programs in the last 5 years? Please provide a breakdown per-year.

**ANSWER**

<u>Financial year</u>	<u>Contractor fees</u>	<u>Comment on shark net programs</u>
16/17	\$1,527,416 \$575,624	51 nets of the Shark Meshing Program, 1 Sept – 30 Apr 5 nets between Ballina & Evans Head, 6-month trial #1
17/18	\$1,583,868 \$453,739	51 nets of the Shark Meshing Program, 1 Sept – 30 Apr 5 nets between Ballina & Evans Head, 6-month trial #2
18/19	\$1,640,376	51 nets of the Shark Meshing Program, 1 Sept – 30 Apr
19/20	\$1,697,997	51 nets of the Shark Meshing Program, 1 Sept – 30 Apr
20/21	\$1,802,362	51 nets of the Shark Meshing Program, 1 Sept – 30 Apr

53. What was the cost of the most recent public and council survey conducted by the DPI regarding shark management, which closed in April 2021?

**ANSWER**

Contractor fees paid to the University of Wollongong for the preferences survey: \$93,410

54. Does the DPI offer a rebate for individuals who purchase personal shark deterrents, similar to Western Australia?

**ANSWER**

No

55. How much money has the DPI invested into non harmful, non-lethal shark deterrents in the last 5 years (i.e. programs other than shark-nets and SMART drumlines)? Please provide a breakdown by year, and by deterrent method.

**ANSWER**

Financial year	Listening Stations	Clever Buoy	Shark Barriers	Electrical Barriers	Helicopters	Drones	Shark Smart App
16/17	\$521,440	\$22,621	\$115,421	\$1,679	\$1,348,056	\$290,960	\$47,397
17/18	\$177,234	\$4,201			\$1,445,191	\$249,298	\$154,223
18/19	\$209,010	\$375		\$76	\$1,225,810	\$138,488	\$180,870
19/20	\$4,217				\$1,551,402	\$1,065,000	\$85,658
20/21	\$121,130				\$165,656	\$2,000,000	\$129,923

56. At the Budget Estimates hearing on 15 March 2022, the DPI stated that only 7 grey-nurse sharks had been caught on SMART-drumlines in their 30 years of operation. However, the article *“The effectiveness of Shark-Management-Alert-in-Real-Time (SMART) drumlines as a tool for catching white sharks, Carcharodon carcharias, off coastal New South Wales, Australia”* authored by Rick D Tate et al, published in May 2021, suggests that at least 26 grey nurse sharks have been caught on SMART- drumlines.

- (a) Can you please explain this apparent discrepancy in numbers?
- (b) Can you please advise how many of the 26 grey nurse sharks were found dead, and how many survived?

**ANSWER**

- i. The reference to 7 greynurse sharks caught on SMART drumlines was for the 2021/22 financial year up to 27 February 2022.
- ii. All 26 greynurse sharks referred to in the Tate et al paper were released alive. In fact, since 8 December 2016, 69 greynurse sharks were caught on SMART drumlines have been released alive. All 69 greynurse sharks were tagged with an identification tag, and two of those greynurse sharks have been recaptured on SMART drumlines and again released alive.

57. At the Budget Estimates hearing on 15 March 2022, in response to questions from Ms Hurst about whether non-target animals are tagged, the DPI responded “The general practice is to tag and release the animals”.

- (a) Can you please clarify if it is standard operating procedure for all animals (both target and non-target) to be tagged after being caught on the SMART-drumline?
- (b) Is there any discretion when it comes to tagging non-target animals?

(c) Are there any species that are not routinely tagged – if so, why?

## ANSWER

- (a) It is standard operating procedure for all sharks to be tagged with an identification tag, the same type of identification tag as those used in the DPI Fisheries Gamefish Tagging Program. The target species (White, Tiger and Bull sharks) are also tagged with acoustic tags so they can be detected by the network of 21 (currently and will be 37 by 30 June) tagged shark listening stations. Subject to research needs, some target sharks are also tagged with Pop-up Satellite Archival Tags, which record water depth, temperature and the sharks location every 30 seconds.
- (b) It is at the discretion of the Contractor to determine if a shark should be tagged. To date the survival rate on SMART drumlines is about 99%, and the gear is operated to maximise and continually improve on that rate. However, in some instances, animals do not trigger an alert, and Contractors may come across the animal either during a random check of the lines throughout the day, or at the end of the day at retrieval of all SMART drumlines. In those instances of prolonged capture, the DPI-trained Contractors assess the likelihood of post-tagging survival and if at all concerned for the welfare of the shark it will not be tagged.
- (c) All sharks should receive an identification tag.

58. In the Sydney Region SMART-drumline data for 1 November to 1 December 2019, 3 sharks have the following notation: *“No trigger. Time is indicative of when the contractor arrived to pick up the gear at the end of the day”*

- (a) Why did the DPI not receive a trigger when these sharks were caught on the SMART drumline?
- (b) Over the last 10 years, how many incidents have there been where an animal has not triggered the SMART drumline alert system?

## ANSWER

- (a) As per 57(b), there are instances where the post-hooking movements and activity of the animal are so minor that they do not remove the trigger magnet from the base of the SMART drumline to activate an alert. Despite the rumours and anecdotal reports that all marine animals react violently to hooking/capture, DPI has learnt over the last 6 years that the majority of animals are relatively placid when hooked and easily managed following with the appropriate training.
- (b) Since 8 December 2016 when Contractors started deploying SMART drumlines, until 29 March 2022 there have been 63 sharks, 7 turtles and 1 fish that did not trigger the SMART drumline. Of those, 49 were released alive.

59. The latest SMART drumline data available on the Shark Smart website is from 2019 (for Sydney, Newcastle and Bega) and 2020 (for North Coast).

- (a) When will the website be updated with more up-to-date data?
- (b) In the interim, can you please provide any new data that is available in relation to the number of target and non-target species caught and tagged on SMART Drumlines, and their status (dead or alive)?

**ANSWER**

- (a) The 2021 data is going through the usual QA/QC quality assurance/quality control process and will be available on the SharkSmart website shortly.
- (b) Preliminary data (subject to final quality assurance and quality control processes QA/QC) for 2021 SMART drumlines

	Caught	Alive	Dead	Tagged
<b>TARGET SHARKS</b>				
White Shark	111	109	2	109
Tiger Shark	55	55	0	50
Bull Shark	11	11	0	11
<b>NON-TARGET SHARKS</b>				
Dusky Whaler	29	29	0	26
Common Blacktip	15	14	1	14
Smooth Hammerhead	9	8	1	8
Grey nurse Shark	8	8	0	8
Bronze Whaler	3	3	0	3
Scalloped Hammerhead	3	3	0	3
Shortfin Mako	2	2	0	2
Sandbar Shark	1	1	0	1
Great Hammerhead	1	1	0	1
<b>OTHER NON-TARGET SPECIES</b>				
Loggerhead turtle	9	9	0	no
Manta Ray	1	1	0	no
Snapper	1	0	1	no
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>236</b>

## AGRICULTURE AND WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES

### Questions from Mr Justin Field MLC

#### NRC Review of land management and biodiversity conservation reforms

60. For each of the recommendations ‘supported’ or ‘supported in principle’ from the Natural Resources Commission review of land management and biodiversity conservation reforms (<https://www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/land-mngt>), what is the status of implementation of the Government’s response.

#### ANSWER

The status of implementing the NSW Government’s response to the recommendations ‘supported’ or ‘supported in principle’ in the Natural Resources Commission July 2019 report *Land management and biodiversity conservation reforms* is as follows:

NRC RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
The NSW Government strengthen compliance frameworks by:	
2.1 Reviewing the roles, responsibilities and resourcing for monitoring and enforcing compliance with certifications and notifications to clear and set asides under the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code.	<b>Complete.</b>
2.2 Developing clear processes to monitor and report on compliance with certifications and notifications to clear and set asides under the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code. Monitoring and reporting processes should be developed with consideration of best practice principles, including ensuring monitoring can identify incidents of non-compliance and compliance risks in a timely way.	LLS will continue to work with EES to develop appropriate processes to monitor and report on compliance with certifications, notifications and set-aside management.
2.3 Reviewing the drivers of high rates of unexplained clearing and address identified issues.	Unexplained clearing is the responsibility of the Environment, Energy and Science Group, Department of Planning and Environment.
2.4 Developing processes to ensure six monthly monitoring and reporting of unexplained clearing as part of the trigger framework.	<b>In progress.</b>
3. The NSW Government undertake an immediate review of Part 3 (pasture expansion) of the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code to address risks to biodiversity values state-wide resulting from high rates of certifications and notifications to clear under this part of the Code.	<b>In progress.</b>
4. The NSW Government replace the existing policy review trigger with the immediate implementation of the Commission’s proposed trigger framework.	<b>In-progress.</b>
5. The Environment, Energy and Science Group, Local Land Services and the Biodiversity Conservation Trust	<b>Complete.</b>

NRC RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
provide a quarterly report on the status of triggers to the Cluster Ministers Group for the Planning, Industry and Environment Cluster.	
7. If a coordinated, reform specific MER program remains a NSW Government priority, the NSW Government implement an overarching MER framework within six months that is informed by the Commission's proposed MER framework so that sufficient data is collected to inform the three- and five-year reviews to the best possible extent.	<b>In progress.</b>
8. The Secretary of the Planning, Industry and Environment Cluster establish an overarching steering committee (with independent Chair) comprised of relevant agencies to oversee coordination and implementation across the whole reform, including: the implementation of the trigger and MER frameworks alignment of strategic priorities, including conservation investment responses to emerging issues landholder engagement and capacity building data and information sharing.	<b>Complete.</b>
9. As part of the three-year review, the NSW government should consider: 9.1 Barriers to landholder engagement with the native vegetation panel. This review should include the role and responsibilities of the Panel under the Local Land Services Act 2013 and potential opportunities to increase the options available to the NV panel to assist with applications that fall outside of the Code.	<b>In progress.</b>

### NSW Land Management Report 2018-2020

61. Regarding the NSW Land Management Report 2018-2020 ([https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/1363713/NSW-Land-Management-Report-WEB.pdf](https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1363713/NSW-Land-Management-Report-WEB.pdf)); has any analysis been done by LLS to understand the drivers of low percentage of “hectares Implemented” versus the area of ‘hectares authorised’?”

(a) If yes, what was the nature of this analysis and will it be made public?

#### ANSWER

Local Land Services is undertaking work to understand the drivers of the implementation rates of authorised land management activities under the *Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018* relative to the area of hectares authorised under the Code.

62. In relation to the total amount of code compliant clearing being notified or certified across the state, i.e. ‘hectares authorised’, are there any quantity triggers that would necessitate a review of the operation of the code?

#### ANSWER

Local Land Services’ implementation of actions in response to Recommendation 4 of the Natural Resources Commission July 2019 report Land management and biodiversity



conservation reforms are in progress.

### **LLS site visits relating to vegetation clearing under the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code**

63. How many site visits to properties have been made by LLS staff in each LLS region in relation to application of the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code?

#### **ANSWER**

Local Land Services estimates it has carried out more than 1000 site visits State-wide in relation to the application of the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018.

64. How does LLS decide when to undertake a site visit associated with application of the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code?

#### **ANSWER**

Local Land Services carries out a site visit for all applications for certificates under s60Y of the *Local Land Services Act 2013*. Local Land Services may also carry out site visits in relation to activities requiring notification under the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018.

65. Is there a consistent requirement for a site visit associated with parts of the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code?

#### **ANSWER**

Local Land Services carries out a site visit for all applications for certificates under s60Y of the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.

### **LLS oversight of set aside management requirements**

66. Regarding the establishment and management of set asides under the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018:

- (a) How many individual properties in each of the LLS region have established set asides since the introduction of the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018?
- (b) What is the total area of set asides established in each LLS regions?
- (c) For how many of these set asides has LLS sought records from land owners/managers in regards to their management?
- (d) What records and information are typically sought and provided when these requests are made by LLS?
- (e) Have many times has LLS amend the relevant mandatory code compliant certificate to prescribe or preclude specific management actions?

#### **ANSWER**

(a) Central Tablelands-- 6; Central West--73; Greater Sydney--2; Hunter--26; Murray--33; North Coast--35; North West--45; Northern Tablelands--14; Riverina--67; South East--13; Western--80.

(b) The total area of set asides established in each LLS region is available on the Local Land Services website in the Public Information Register – Set Aside Areas (LMC 2017)

and Public Information Register – Set Aside Areas (LMC 2018).

(c) None.

(d) No records have been sought to date.

(e) None.

#### **Expiry of clearing cap under Part 5 Equity of the Code**

67. Regarding the March 2021 expiry of the clearing cap under Part 5 (Equity) of the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code:

(a) Has LLS provided any code compliant certificates under Part 5 of the Land Management (Native Vegetation) for an amount above the clearing cap that was lifted in 2021?

i. If so, how many have been issued for each LLS region?

(b) For each of the code compliant certificates issued under Part 5 of the code, above the previous clearing cap, what was the total area certified for clearing?

#### **ANSWER**

(a) Yes. One in the Western region.

(b) 1039.34 hectares.

#### **LLS rates for land zoned for environmental conservation**

68. Does LLS know the number and location of land owners who pay LLS rates, despite their properties being primarily zoned for environmental conservation under local council Local Environmental Plans (LEPs)?

(a) If yes, how many properties fit this category in each LLS region?

#### **ANSWER**

LLS does not collect this information as part of the Annual Return of Land and Stock.

69. Given land owners of these properties are generally not allowed to conduct any business which may generate a profit on their land, what direct benefit do they receive by paying LLS rates?

#### **ANSWER**

LLS rates go towards reducing biosecurity risks across the whole state. All landholders, including those under LEPs and conservation agreements have biosecurity obligations. The contributions that landholders pay benefit the whole state from biosecurity protections and healthier landscapes.

Uncleared property can produce biosecurity risks such as wild dogs, foxes, deer and pigs which carry significant threats to local communities and industries through carrying disease. LLS assist property owners by managing these risks in accordance with the Biosecurity Act and Local Strategic Plans.

70. The LLS regulations already provide for a range of land use exemptions from rates, including rifle ranges, sugar cane farms, caravan parks and golf courses. Why do these land uses enjoy an exemption, but land holders of land zoned for environmental conservation do not?

**ANSWER**

LLS rates landholders as per the regulations.

71. Has there ever been formal or informal review in LLS of whether it is appropriate for landholders whose land is primarily zoned for environmental conservation under LEPs have to pay LLS rates?
- (a) If so, when did this review happen and what was the outcome?

**ANSWER**

The last formal examination of the LLS rating structure was undertaken by IPART in 2014, the report is Cabinet in Confidence.

**State forests in different forest management zones**

72. Which State Forests are in each of the following Management Zones:
- (a) the Taree forest management zone?
  - (b) the Nowra forest management zone?
  - (c) the Narooma forest management zone?
  - (d) the Badja forest management zone?
  - (e) the Bago-Maragle forest management zone?
  - (f) the Batemans Bay forest management zone?
  - (g) the Dorrigo forest management zone?
  - (h) the Eden forest management zone?
  - (i) the Glen Innes forest management zone?

**ANSWER**

Forestry Corporation maintains a range of current and historical forest management layers that have grouped State forests into various areas over time. There is no active forest management layer that groups forest management zones with the names described above. There is a historical data layer that refers to forest management areas with these names, and forests are detailed for each of those below. Note that this historical layer is not used for any forest management, contractual or reporting purposes.

- a) Forests in the historical forest management area called Taree:

KIWARRAK

YARRATT

b) Forests in the historical forest management area called Nowra:

CURRAMBENE

JERRAWANGALA

MCDONALD

NOWRA

SHOALHAVEN

TOMERONG

YERRIYONG

c) Forests in the historical forest management area called Narooma:

BODALLA

CORUNNA

DAMPIER

MORUYA

WANDELLA

WANDERA

d) Forests in the historical forest management area called Badja:

BADJA

e) Forests in the historical forest management area called Bago-Maragle:

BAGO

GREEN HILLS

MARAGLE

f) Forests in the historical forest management area called Batemans Bay:

BENANDARAH

BOLARO

BOYNE

BUCKENBOWRA

CLYDE

CURROWAN

FLAT ROCK

KIOLOA

MOGO

NORTH BROOMAN

SHALLOW CROSSING

SOUTH BROOMAN

TERMEIL

WANDERA

WOODBURN

YADBORO

g) Forests in the historical forest management area called Dorrigo:

CHAE LUNDI

CLOUDS CREEK

ELLIS

HYLAND

KANGAROO RIVER

MARENGO

MOONPAR

SHEAS NOB

WILD CATTLE CREEK

h) Forests in the historical forest management area called Eden:

BERMAGUI

BOMBALA  
BONDI  
BRUCES CREEK  
CATHCART  
COOLANGUBRA  
CRAIGIE  
EAST BOYD  
COOLANGUBRA  
TURNER  
GLEN ALLEN  
GLENBOG  
GNUPA  
MUMBULLA  
MURRAH  
NADGEE  
NALBAUGH  
NULLICA  
NUNGATTA  
TANJA  
TANTAWANGALO  
TIMBILLICA  
TOWAMBA  
WANDELLA  
YAMBULLA  
YURAMMIE

i) Forests in the historical forest management area called Glen Innes:

BROTHER

BUTTERLEAF

CURRAMORE

GIBRALTAR RANGE

GLEN ELGIN

LONDON BRIDGE

MOOGEM

MOUNT MITCHELL

OAKWOOD

SPIRABO

TORRINGTON

WARRA

**Forestry Corporation NSW engagement with the EPA regarding additional protective measures post bushfires**

73. Is Forestry Corporation NSW currently engaging with the EPA on any protective measures for native forest harvesting operations additional to those in the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals? If so, what is the nature of this engagement?

**ANSWER**

Forestry Corporation continues to engage with the EPA on a range of topics through its regular Senior Officers Group meetings and other operational forums.

**Frontier Economics report 'Comparing the value of alternative uses of native forests in Southern NSW'**

74. Has the Minister or his staff received a briefing from DPI or FCNSW on the November 2021, Frontier Economics published a report titled: *'Comparing the value of alternative uses of native forests in Southern NSW'*. Available here: <https://www.frontier-economics.com.au/documents/2021/11/comparing-the-value-of-alternative-uses-of-native-forest-in-southern-nsw.pdf/>

- (a) If so,
- i. was the briefing written or verbal?
  - ii. who provided the briefing?
  - iii. when was the briefing provided?

**ANSWER**

No.

### **North coast wood supply contract extensions: Auditor-General review**

75. Will wood supply agreements on the north coast, currently being negotiated for extension at historical timber supply volumes, receive any independent scrutiny or review before a recommendation is made to the Minister about their finalisation?

#### **ANSWER**

Forestry Corporation's Wood Supply Agreements (WSAs) for sawlogs on the north coast have been in place since 2003 and are published in full on its website. The same contracts are in place today and it is these that are proposed to be extended for a further five years. The extensions are in line with the long-term sustainable yield levels, which were independently reviewed and published in 2021. The performance of NSW hardwood native and plantation operations has previously been audited by the Auditor General and the recommendations have been implemented. The same contracts are in place today and it is these that are proposed to be extended for a further five years. The extensions are in line with the long-term sustainable yield levels, which were independently reviewed and published in 2021.

76. Will/ has the Forestry Corporation NSW consider having the wood supply contracts for the north coast reviewed by the Auditor-General before making a recommendation to the Minister about their finalisation?

#### **ANSWER**

See answer to Question 75.

77. Will there be any independent evaluation of the potential liability to the state from entering into contracts where there is considerable uncertainty about whether contract obligations can be fulfilled?

#### **ANSWER**

The WSA extensions are not new contracts, they have been in place since 2003 and the provisions of the contract deal with contractual liability matters. The obligations in the contract are underpinned by Forestry Corporation's long-term sustainable yield assessments, which confirm the available timber resource is sufficient to meet timber supply commitments. This review was carried out post the 2019/20 fires and was independently reviewed and published last year.

78. If Forestry Corporation NSW has/ will not engage the Auditor-General, or another suitably qualified independent reviewer, regarding the wood supply contract extensions on the north coast and potential future liabilities to the state, what is the reason?

#### **ANSWER**

The WSAs are commercial contracts and have been in place since 2003. These contracts are published on the Forestry Corporation website and have been previously audited by the Auditor General for performance. The terms of the contract remain the same, with the contract



period being considered for extension for five years. The provisions of the contract deal with contractual liability matters. The obligations in the contract are underpinned by Forestry Corporation's long-term sustainable yield assessments, which confirm the available timber resource is sufficient to meet timber supply commitments. This review was carried out post the 2019/20 fires and was independently reviewed and published last year.

#### **North coast wood supply contract extensions: quantity and value**

79. How many North Coast wood supply agreement holders have engaged in negotiations with Forestry Corporation NSW and indicated they will be seeking an extension to their current wood supply agreements at existing volumes?

#### **ANSWER**

Forestry Corporation is working through discussions with different categories of WSA progressively. In line with this process, discussions have commenced with Type A WSA holders.

80. Have any current wood supply agreement holders indicated they will not be negotiating an extension to their wood supply agreements past 2023?
- (a) If so, how many?

#### **ANSWER**

No.

#### **Condition of roads managed by Forestry Corporation NSW - complaints from the public**

81. How many complaints has Forestry Corporation NSW received since the 2019/20 bushfires about the condition of roads or roadworks been conducted by Forestry Corporation in the below state forests:
- (a) Brooman State Forest?
- (b) Shallow Crossing State Forest?

#### **ANSWER**

Forestry Corporation receives correspondence on a broad range of topics. Correspondence is not categorised in this way. \

82. For each complaint received, what date was it received and what was the grievance raised?

#### **ANSWER**

See answer to Question 81.

#### **Marine park compliance activities**

Regarding the evidence received on 15 March 2022 by Mr Scott Hansen, Director General, Department of Primary Industries that:

‘The number of section 41s, which are harm or attempt to harm any animal in a sanctuary zone, in 2021 that was 174 penalty notices issued on that, and taking fish in declared waters there

were 91 of those—that is, recreational fishing.’

83. Of the 174 penalty notices, how many of the offenses occurred in each of the marine parks in NSW? Please provide a number per marine park.

**ANSWER**

People caught illegally fishing in a marine park in 2021 - Broken down by each Marine Park:

<b>Marine Park Name</b>	<b>Penalty Notices</b>
Batemans Marine Park	44
Cape Byron Marine Park	6
Jervis Bay Marine Park	32
Port Stephens - Great Lakes Marine Park	81
Solitary Islands Marine Park	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>

84. How many section 41s have been issued across the marine park estate in the following years:
- (a) 2021?
  - (b) 2020?
  - (c) 2019?
  - (d) 2018?
  - (e) 2017?

**ANSWER**

Note the request is for calendar year and not financial year as above.

- (a) 2021 - 184
- (b) 2020 - 140
- (c) 2019 - 125
- (d) 2018 - 86
- (e) 2017 - 98

85. How many DPI compliance staff are there allocated to each NSW marine park?

**ANSWER**

Marine Park based Fisheries Officers and normal District Fisheries Officers will often assist each other with duties based on regulatory risks and priorities within the Zones they are based. Thus the number of officers allocated to a Marine Park is not a direct reflection of compliance effort in and around Marine Parks per se.

<b>Marine Park Name</b>	<b>Fisheries Officers Allocated</b>
Batemans Marine Park	2
Cape Byron Marine Park	2
Jervis Bay Marine Park	2
Port Stephens - Great Lakes Marine Park	3
Solitary Islands Marine Park	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

86. What have the numbers of compliance staff in each marine park in the following years:

- (a) 2021?
- (b) 2020?
- (c) 2019?
- (d) 2018?
- (e) 2017?

#### **ANSWER**

<b>Marine Park Name</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Batemans Marine Park	2	2	2	2	2
Cape Byron Marine Park	2	2	2	2	2
Jervis Bay Marine Park	2	2	2	2	2
Port Stephens - Great Lakes Marine Park	2	2	2	2	3
Solitary Islands Marine Park	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>

#### **Marine park reform processes**

87. Did the August 2020 report prepared for MEEKP “Evaluation of the performance of NSW Marine Protected Areas; biological and ecological parameters” inform the draft network management plan?

- (a) If yes, how?
- (b) Why was it not referenced?

#### **ANSWER**

Yes.

- An outline of evidence used to inform preparation of the draft NSW Mainland Marine Park Network Management Plan is on p. 17 of the draft Plan itself. This includes background information reports prepared by the Authority’s member agencies and external consultants, additional information, research and academic papers identified by agencies, independent

experts and key stakeholders, opinion of subject matter experts, including the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel, marine park advisory committees and agencies knowledge from Traditional Owners community input and advice.

- Management plans typically do not include a list of references to scientific literature. Appendix B in the draft Plan lists background information reports and could be updated in finalising the Plan. The MEEKP paper on biological and ecological parameters was released on 1 December with the draft Plan on public exhibition for a further two months up to 31 January. Likewise, the companion paper by BDO EconSearch on social, cultural and economic values, to complement of marine parks was prepared to accompany the MEEKP paper, and hence released at the same time, and could also be listed in the final Plan.

88. Will submissions on the network management plan be made public?

**ANSWER**

A submissions report is being prepared for consideration by the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Environment and Heritage and can be released at the discretion of the Ministers.

89. Why have submissions from the Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Park proposal not been made public?

**ANSWER**

Extensive consultation on the Hawkesbury shelf marine bioregion marine park proposal was undertaken in 2018 and is still under consideration by the NSW Government.

Existing management rules for the aquatic reserve network remain in place and the NSW Government continues to explore opportunities for better management of values and threats across the whole NSW marine estate via the delivery of the Marine Estate Management Strategy (2018-2028).

90. What has been done by the Government to understand the impacts of the amnesty and ensure that such a massacre has not occurred?

**ANSWER**

Limited recreational fishing access was provided across these six sanctuary zones. These changes followed targeted consultation including with local members of the former Batemans Marine Park Advisory Committee.

91. What feedback has there been on the amnesty to date?

**ANSWER**

The changes to six sanctuary zones in Batemans Marine Park will be part of statutory consultation to occur in stage 2 of the management planning process and submissions from the community will be considered.

92. Is the Government collating feedback to feed into the management plan process? If so, will they make this public?

**ANSWER**

The draft NSW Mainland Marine Park Network Management Plan was available for the

community to provide feedback from 1 November 2021 to 31 January 2022 under stage 1 of the management planning process. Please refer to the answer to Q88. The changes to six sanctuary zones in Batemans Marine Park will be part of statutory consultation to occur in stage 2 of the management planning process.

### **Sydney Fatal Shark Incident**

93. After the fatal shark incident on 16 Feb, can you outline the exact steps taken by DPI, especially any additional SMART drumlines or shark nets within the vicinity of the incident?

### **ANSWER**

On Wednesday, 16 February at about 4:30pm, some rock fishers observed and filmed a large shark repeatedly bite a male ocean swimmer, 35 years of age off Little Bay Beach, Sydney. The NSW Police, Westpac helicopter and Surf Life Saving NSW attended the scene. DPI was notified of the incident by Surf Life Saving and NSW Police. Based on footage provided by the public DPI shark biologists believe that a White Shark, at least 3 metres in length, was likely responsible.

On the morning of 17 February, DPI officers deployed 6 SMART drumlines from the southern end of Little Bay Beach up to the middle of Malabar Beach/Long Bay to catch, tag and relocate any sharks in the area. The DPI Fisheries vessel, the Solitary Ranger, and two other Fisheries vessels were on patrol to assist with monitoring the drumlines and to provide assistance as required by the Shark Incident Response Team.

All beaches in the Sutherland, Randwick and Waverley areas were closed by their respective councils on 16 February for 24 hours consistent with Surf Life Saving NSW's standard operating procedures. The organisers of the Australian titles surf boat carnival, which was due to start on the afternoon of 17 February at Cronulla Beach, discussed the incident with the DPI Shark Incident Response Team and decided to postpone the event until 18 February. Surf Life Saving NSW provided drones and on water assets to monitor for sharks in the event area.

15 SMART drumlines continued to be deployed in the area from Bondi to Little Bay Beach from 17-27 February by DPI Fisheries. DPI continued to work with the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program, Bite Club, Surfing NSW and Surf Life Saving NSW to provide information about mental health services and the NSW Shark Management Program to local communities over the weekend of 26-27 February.

94. Western Australia currently offers a \$200 rebate for ocean users purchasing personal shark deterrents that have been independently tested and scientifically proven to significantly reduce the risk of shark bite. The products offered under the rebate were tested and proved effective against Great White Sharks. Noting the nature of the recent fatal incident in Sydney, has there been any discussion around instituting a similar program, offering rebates to ocean-users in NSW purchasing these independently tested and scientifically proven personal shark deterrents?

### **ANSWER**

No

95. According to the most recent DPI public surveys (found here), shark meshing is  
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extremely unpopular and provides little more than a false sense of security. Wouldn't it be better to shelve the shark nets, and reallocate that funding to more publicly supported measures that can actually reduce the risk, like a personal deterrent subsidy?

## **ANSWER**

DPI engaged Flinders University to conduct independent scientific research into the effectiveness of the five commercially available personal shark deterrents. Four of those products were found to reduce interactions with White Sharks by less than 15%, and the best-performing product reduced interactions by 54%. Those kinds of statistics are why the State-wide Representative Survey and the online opt-in survey conducted by EY Sweeney found that personal deterrents were consistently ranked 6<sup>th</sup> of the 7 available mitigation measures, and as you noted with nets consistently ranked 7<sup>th</sup>. In another study by Charles Sturt University of surfers' attitudes towards sharks and shark mitigation, personal deterrents were found to be owned by very few surfers because they do not trust the currently available products.

The NSW Shark Management Program will continue to combine the traditional shark nets with the most effective and widely accepted mitigation measures identified through testing and trialling under the 2015-2020 Shark Management Strategy.

### **SMART drumlines**

96. With the installation of 170 SMART drumlines as a part of the new Shark Management strategy, will location maps of the approximate locations be made available (noting that SMART drumlines are deployed in the morning and removed at dusk)?

## **ANSWER**

Information about the 2021/22 Shark Management Program, including maps of the locations of SMART drumlines, is already publicly available on the SharkSmart website:  
<https://www.sharksmart.nsw.gov.au>

97. Will catch statistics on SMART drumlines be made publicly available through annual reporting like the Shark Meshing Program?

## **ANSWER**

Catches of target sharks (being White, Tiger and Bull sharks) on SMART drumlines are reported immediately after release on the SharkSmart app. Catch data from the SMART drumlines will be made publicly available on the SharkSmart website once it has been through the standard QA/QC process.

### **Shark Meshing Program**

98. Recently (1 March), Local Government NSW voted unanimously to pass a motion stating:

*That Local Government NSW calls on the NSW Government to phase out of the use of shark nets and replace them with a combination of alternative shark mitigation strategies (such as drone surveillance, personal shark deterrents, education and SMART drumlines) that more effectively protect the beach without damaging marine wildlife.*

Has there been any consideration within the Government to phase out the use of shark nets?

**ANSWER**

The NSW Government and the Department of Primary Industries will continue to consult the 25 coastal councils and communities as to the most appropriate suite of shark mitigation measures for their local government area.

99. What was the cost of the most recent DPI public and council survey (closed April 21)?

**ANSWER**

Contractor fees paid to the University of Wollongong for the preferences survey: \$93,410