

Summary of submissions on the Hardwood Forests Draft Forest Management Plan

A draft Forest Management Plan (FMP) for Hardwood Forests was placed on public exhibition in late 2015. In total, 22 submissions were received from stakeholders including individuals, environment groups and government agencies.

Submissions covered a range of issues. Some submissions raised expressed opposition to native forest harvesting and production of timber from native forests in general and a concern that the IFOA remake will erode environmental protections. Some submissions also presented a view that FSC certification would be better than PEFC.

These comments were noted although their resolution was outside the scope of the Draft Forest Management Plan which is articulating forest management practices within the existing legal and regulatory environment.

Key issues raised in submissions in relation to the content of the Draft FMP included:

- Call for clarification on how consolidating regional Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management Plans (ESFM) plans into a single FMP will effectively address ESFM and questions on how the plan fits with the NFPS, Australia's Sustainable Forest Management Framework of Criteria and Indicators 2008 (policy guidelines), RFAs, FAs, IFOAs.
- Call for greater evidence of sustainable forest management practices and clearer commitments with regard to biodiversity, forest health and fire management and how these management actions will be reported on
- Discussion around the balancing of aspects of the Sustainability Framework and a call that forest ecosystem health is of greater value than profitability
- Call for the FMP to provide clear linkages to operational plans, process, procedures and management strategies
- Questions around employment and economic value by using figures of Corporation as a whole rather than separate divisions
- Concerns that the forests are being 'overcut' and whether wood commitments can be met
- Concerns about Bell Miner Associated Dieback (BMAD) and weed management
- Comments on silviculture practices and regeneration assessments
- Comments on consistent implementation of operational guidelines for Aboriginal cultural heritage management
- Call to clarify meaning of fire related terminology and show clearer linkages between FMP activities and the work of the Bush Fire Management Committees.

Comments were considered and changes made to the draft plan to address issues or incorporate additional information. Examples of these changes include addition of management actions to each section to clarify the focus of management and provide guidance on ESFM reporting; and inclusion of greater detail in relation to framework of policy, agreements and legislation that give rise to ESFM in NSW.