

From: Ministerial Correspondence Mailbox

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Date: Tue, 3 Apr 2018 at 3:13 pm

Subject: A reply to your correspondence to the Minister for the Environment – MD18/991

Dear Mrs Pfitzner,

I refer to your letter to the Premier, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP and email to the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Gabrielle Upton MP about Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) in NSW. Your email was referred to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and I have been asked to reply.

The NSW Government is committed to a native forestry industry that is ecologically sustainable into the future. In August 2016, the Government released the NSW Forestry Industry Roadmap, setting out its vision and plan for ensuring the NSW forestry industry continues to support regional economies while maintaining key native forest values.

***The governments are in the process of reviewing and extending the RFAs***

The NSW Forestry Industry Roadmap reflects the NSW and Commonwealth Governments' shared view that there is an ongoing role for NSW RFAs beyond their current expiry from 2019, and identifies a work program around their review and extension. The NSW and Commonwealth Governments have commenced this work.

The governments recently concluded two consultation processes regarding the NSW RFAs. The first related to the combined ten and fifteen-year review of the RFAs. This review reflected on the actions taken by the NSW and Commonwealth governments to implement the milestones and commitments in the three NSW RFAs between 2004 and 2014. This review was led by the EPA and is being assessed by an Independent Reviewer. A report by Independent Reviewer outlining his findings and recommendations, and the government's response to this report, will be released in mid-2018.

The second consultation process was on the extension of the RFAs prior to their expiry from March 2020. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is leading the process on the RFAs' renewal, including analysing the feedback from recent public consultation processes.

I note that your letter was sent to the Premier as a submission to both consultation processes. The EPA sent all submissions to the RFA review's Independent Reviewer. Your letter was also sent to DPI (Forestry) for consideration as part of the RFAs' renewal.

***The NSW governed is currently remaking the rules for logging on public forests***

Many of the matters raised in your letter are about improving the conduct and regulation of the rules for conducting native forestry operations in public forests. These rules, the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOAs), include requirements that intend to minimise impacts on native plants, animals, important habitat and water quality.

The current IFOAs have been in place for nearly 20 years, and they have not kept pace with regulatory, environmental or forest management best practice. The NSW Government is in the process of rewriting these rules with the intent of making them more efficient, effective and enforceable.

The community will be invited to comment on the draft coastal IFOA once it is finalised, and I hope you will participate in this process. Further information on the coastal IFOA remake is available on the EPA's website at [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry/forestry-regulatory-reforms/coastal-foa-remake](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry/forestry-regulatory-reforms/coastal-foa-remake). You can also register your interest in being provided updates on this reform by emailing [forestry.policy@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:forestry.policy@epa.nsw.gov.au).

If you have any further questions about this issue, please contact Jackie Miles, Manager, Forestry Policy and Programs, on 9995 6701 or at [Jacquelyn.Miles@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jacquelyn.Miles@epa.nsw.gov.au).

**MICHAEL HOOD**

**Director Forestry**

**Environment Protection Authority**