



**James Griffin MP**  
Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and Veterans

MD20/7961

Dr Bronte Somerset  
Secretary  
South East Region Conservation Alliance Inc.  
5-7 Cobargo Street  
QUAAMA NSW 2550

By email: [bjsomerset@gmail.com](mailto:bjsomerset@gmail.com)

Dear Dr Somerset

I refer to your letter to the Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon. Matt Kean MP, on behalf of the South East Region Conservation Alliance Inc, about native forestry operations in south-east NSW. Your letter was referred to me, and I have been asked to reply on the Minister's behalf.

I apologise for the delay in responding to your inquiries. As you may be aware, there have been ongoing discussions within the NSW Government on forestry operations on the south coast post the 2019/20 bushfires since you wrote. I wanted to ensure you were given current information on the status of forestry operations in that area.

While the bushfires had an unprecedented impact on native forests and the environment, they also impacted regional economies, jobs and communities. The NSW Government has considered all these impacts and remains committed to the long-term and environmentally sustainable management of our native forests.

I note your concerns about employment in the forestry industry and your correspondence to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, the Hon. John Barilaro MP. As part of fire recovery efforts and its COVID-19 response, the Government must also secure regional jobs, economies, and timber to rebuild communities. This includes continuing forestry operations in a mix of burnt and unburnt state forests where it can be done in an environmentally safe manner.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is continuing to work with the Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) and other NSW Government agencies to determine a long-term approach to managing the risks posed by timber harvesting in post-fire landscapes of coastal NSW.

The NSW Government has recently engaged the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to review the available scientific evidence on the environmental impacts of forestry operations in areas affected by the 2019-20 bushfires. The NRC will then recommend best-practice approaches to ensure forestry operations in fire-impacted forests are carried out in an ecologically sustainable manner, and therefore meet the requirements of the *Forestry Act 2012*, the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (CIFOA) and relevant Regional Forest Agreements. The NRC is expected to deliver its findings later this year.

Since the fires, the EPA issued bespoke site-specific conditions to supplement the CIFOA to mitigate additional environmental risks caused by the fires. In February 2021, FCNSW announced its intentions to no longer seek these supplementary conditions and will return to operating under the CIFOA.

The EPA has increased its regulatory presence on the ground at all stages of logging operations to promote FCNSW complying with the CIFOA. The EPA will take appropriate regulatory action to address any non-compliance observed and has a suite of regulatory tools to drive compliance and environmental outcomes.

The EPA will also work closely with community, industry, Aboriginal and environment groups, concerned about the impact of logging on the environment, their communities and their regional economies.

The EPA continues to post regular updates on the regulation of native forestry post the 2019/20 bushfires on its website at [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry/bushfire-affected-forestry-operations](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry/bushfire-affected-forestry-operations).

If you have any more questions about this issue, please contact David Fowler, Executive Director Regulatory Practice and Environmental Solutions, EPA, at 9995 5577 or at [david.fowler@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:david.fowler@epa.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Griffin', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**James Griffin MP**  
Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and Veterans