

Forest Regulation and Codes of Practice

IFA Forestry Policy Statement 2.8

The Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) advocates the ongoing development, use, auditing and review of Codes of Forest Practice and associated forest regulations. Codes of Practice provide a valuable tool to regulate forest management activities such as timber harvesting and roading. All significant forest activities should be subject to Codes of Forest Practice, which are regularly reviewed and audited with public reporting.

The Issue

Forest management activities and practices, such as harvesting and roading, have the potential to impact adversely on other forest values if not carried out appropriately. Codes of Forest Practice are essential to control standards of forestry in order to protect forest wood and non-wood values for the community.

Background

Most States and Territories have Codes of Forest Practice that apply to public and/or private forests and aim to create a balance between conservation and production. They act as guidelines for a variety of situations, management intentions, areas and types of forest and ownership. Based on best science and forestry knowledge, these Codes provide standards and guidelines to ensure reasonable protection of the environmental and cultural values of the forest through forest practices.

Codes of Forest Practice can ensure commercial timber growing and harvesting operations are carried out on public and private land in a way that is compatible with the conservation of environmental and social values within forests. They promote the ecologically sustainable management of native forests proposed for timber production and enhance public confidence in forest management.

Major challenges related to Codes of Practice are to ensure effective implementation of existing Codes across all timber production and roading activities, regardless of land tenure. The coverage of regulations and Codes needs to be improved to deal with other significant forest activities. Forest managers need training and support in developing and implementing Codes, particularly in small-scale harvesting activities.

Policy

The IFA supports and encourages Codes of Forest Practices that:

- Promote best practice forest management
- Are based on best available science and knowledge
- Set environmental standards
- Are subject to regular public review
- Have appropriate support, monitoring, compliance, audit, reporting and, where required, enforcement.

The IFA considers that:

- Codes of Practice provide an effective tool to regulate forest management
- Appropriate training and support is needed to assist forest managers and those who implement forest activities to meet Code of Practice requirements
- Codes of Practice need to be developed in a way that is appropriate to the scale, ownership and type of forest, and management intent.