



Media release

Scientists say NSW Forestry Bill will not achieve positive outcome for farmers or the environment

The Institute of Foresters of Australia has joined the chorus of concerns from all sectors of the scientific community with a scathing assessment of the NSW Government's Draft *Native Forestry Bill 2017*. In a letter to the Hon Paul Toole MP, Minister for Lands and Forests, the IFA has noted that recommendations from an Independent Biodiversity Legislation Review Panel commissioned by your Government have been ignored and the exposure draft of the Bill gave only a week for forestry experts to make comment.

National President of the Institute of Foresters of Australia Mr Bob Gordon said, 'Our members work across the full spectrum of forestry from parks and conservation management to timber production and processing as well as research and academia and as such, we can provide authoritative and independent advice on forest science and management – if we are given the opportunity.

'On this occasion, when we were given the time our comments were ignored and when we should have had the opportunity to review the draft Bill, our members were not even consulted.

'The Institute has serious concerns about the Bill which includes discretionary clauses such as "...if the regulatory authority considers..." and "...for any reason the regulatory authority thinks appropriate..." and terms such as "material", defined only as "not trivial".

'The NSW Government has stated support for a sustainable native forest timber industry and flagged the importance of a viable private native forest resource in the future of that industry, but this draft Bill will achieve the exact opposite by laying red tape upon red tape backed up by thinly veiled threats of punitive fines to landholders.

'We strongly make the point that any legislation covering private native forestry should treat it as a sustainable land use contributing to the environmental, social and economic wellbeing of both the rural and broader environment and community. The current draft treats forestry as land clearing and the proposed penalties reflect this.

'This approach can only lead to further mistrust, undesirable land use practices and the avoidance of authorised forestry undertakings', said Bob.

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