

Executive Summary

An independent review of DECCW Old Growth and Rainforest Private Native Forestry assessment protocols interpretation and implementation was initiated by DECCW. The Review involved using contract Aerial Photo Interpretation specialists to follow DECCW procedures for implementing the Old-growth forest and rainforest protocols.

The Review found that the protocol implementation is working very well for rainforest and is identifying rainforest with a high level of accuracy.

The implementation of old-growth is highly variable and problematic and has apparently resulted in some areas of old-growth being potentially available for harvest. The main recommendations to improve this outcome are the use of good quality imagery and significantly increased fieldwork by aerial photo interpreters.

Field measurement by DECCW PNF officers was found to be similar to measurement by Contractors. As is expected in measuring variables such as growth stage, there is variation however the data do not show any systematic differences. The measurement of disturbance factors did show some systematic differences, however it was at a level that did not affect outcomes. Nevertheless there does need to be calibration with EPRG to ensure that field measurement techniques are consistently applied. Peer review of a proportion of old-growth and rainforest PNF PVPs is also recommended.

Documentation of procedures and the ability to track what has happened at any given property is excellent. DECCW have also demonstrated a culture of continuous improvement. All staff encountered were very professional and skilled, and demonstrated a focus on implementing the protocols as accurately and efficiently as possible.