

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in this review process.

The EPA has been inconsistent in living up to its brief of Protecting the Environment. For example, in the face of over 10,000 reported breaches by logging contractors operating in the State Forests of the Southern and the Eden Regions of NSW only a handful of prosecutions have been made since the RFA was signed 2 decades ago. Examples such as Cherry State Forest also exist on the North Coast despite watertight evidence of illegal behaviour by contractors. This lack of willingness to prosecute non-compliance has not only emboldened a cavalier attitude amongst some sections of the FCNSW and contractors but has also destroyed public confidence in the the EPA itself.

One example of how the EPA could be acting true to its noble charter if it had the resources is the recent observation by EPA officers of logging occurring in Mogo State Forest esp. compartments 147 and 148. Hardworking EPA ground staff have documented the situation there esp. wrt hollow bearing tree destruction. They have met locally with concerned residents and helped them understand the complex provisions of the Threatened Species legislation. However, locals have been left with no confidence that documented breaches will result in any consequences whatsoever for the FCNSW or its contractors. This in turn undermines community willingness to participate in field observation of the harvesting operations as the feeling is "what's the point?"

In short the EPA needs to be far better resourced AND to adopt a far more assertive and pro-active approach in using the legislation to proceed to prosecution of non-compliant behaviours, not just in forestry but also in waste disposal.

Only then will the organisation be acting true to its charter and thereby earn public acclaim, deservedly so.

Nick Hopkins



I confirm that my submission does not contain sensitive information and can be published in full on the Environment Protection Authority website.