



Mark Speakman
Minister for the Environment
Minister for Heritage
Assistant Minister for Planning

The Hon Niall Blair MLC
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Lands and Water

MEDIA RELEASE

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TRIAL TO TEST NEW TIMBER HARVEST RULES

Environment Minister Mark Speakman and Minister for Primary Industries Niall Blair have announced a three-month trial to assess protections for threatened species as part of the remake of the coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOAs).

Mr Speakman said the trial was part of the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government's commitment to modernise the regulatory framework for forestry operations on Crown-timber land in coastal NSW.

"In February 2014 the NSW Government publicly released a discussion paper for a six-week consultation period and undertook a series of public workshops," he said.

Mr Blair said the remake of the coastal IFOAs will make sustainable timber harvesting rules simple and clear, help to ensure long-term viability of the sector, and protect the environment.

"This is a small-scale trial in a highly restricted area which will test the implementation of proposed new conditions, designed to achieve better environmental outcomes and the same wood supply outcomes," Mr Blair said.

"The simple fact is the current IFOA regulations are too complex, confusing and in some parts contradictory. When regulations are vague, confusing and contradictory – mistakes happen."

The trial, which is expected to run for three months, required the NSW Government to authorise a temporary amendment to the IFOA for the Lower North East region.

Many of the options being tested in the trial for threatened species protection were based on recommendations reviewed by the independent Threatened Species Expert Panel.

The Environment Protection Authority and Forestry Corporation of NSW will carefully manage the trial to ensure appropriate controls are in place, to minimise any potential environmental impacts.

The trial will take place in six approved forestry operations, covering a total of approximately 200 hectares.

For more information about the trial and the amending instruments to the Lower North East IFOA, visit www.epa.nsw.gov.au/forestagreements/LowerNEIFOA.htm.