



TIMBER NSW

20 July 2015

An economically, socially and environmentally sustainable timber industry.

Media Release

NSW forests – they are here to stay

The Environment Protection Authority is in the environmental spotlight for its remake of Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals. While the forestry industry thinks that there is significant room for improvement in the draft document, it's not the complete disaster for native forests that some sections of the community are claiming.

Maree McCaskill, CEO of the industry's peak body, Timber NSW said, 'The EPA claim there will be no erosion of environmental values while maintaining access to existing levels of wood supply; but reading the document shows that's not totally correct and, in its current form, the regulations will further restrict timber supply.'

'The EPA is recommending more regulation and more prescriptive outcomes for each individual hectare of forest rather than taking a step back and looking at the ecosystem as a whole.'

'It is important to take a 'landscape' view of timber operations in NSW to understand the whole picture.'

'Within NSW there are 22 million hectares of land supporting native vegetation, but only a tiny fraction (7 per cent) of these lands are subject to timber harvesting.'

'The NSW Government manages around 12 million hectares of publicly-owned native forest and 11 million hectares of that can never be harvested.'

'NSW has 7.3 million hectares of National Parks and reserves, which can't be touched,' she said.

Right now NSW has the most heavily regulated forestry operation in the world – even without the changes that the EPA wants to impose.

There is no clear felling in NSW other than in plantations. Selective harvesting is used and, since the late 1990s, Regional Forest Agreements have protected all true wilderness, rainforest, old growth and high conversation value forest.

'The public discourse about this important economic and green industry is too important to leave it to the doomsayers who have been predicting, for the last 50 years, that NSW will be stripped of forest.'

'Nothing could be further from the truth; NSW has a vibrant forestry industry that values our environment, a healthy ecosystem, and more trees than we have ever had in the past', said Ms McCaskill.