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To Whom it may concern

Re: Private Native Forestry Review

This submission is made on behalf of Allied Natural Wood Exports (ANWE). ANWE export woodchip and other wood products to the international market, including certified natural and plantation grown wood products from public and private forests.

ANWE representatives participated in the Southern NSW PNF Code Workshop on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019. ANWE supports the recommendations from the meeting which were tabled by Local Land Services staff in an email dated 1/02/2019. Further to the meeting discussions ANWE would like to emphasize the following recommendations for the code review.

### Recommendations

1. That the definition of broad scale clearing in the *Native Vegetation Act 2003* be amended to exclude reference to Private Native forestry when it involves the sustainable management of private native forests for long-term timber production.
2. That the basal area limits should not have a stand height threshold and the standards set for basal area removal within the *Silvicultural Guidelines (2010)* be used.
3. That the *Regeneration and stocking* clause be amended to allow 3 years before final confirmation of regeneration success in all forest types.
4. In its current form the Private Native Forestry Code is not able to be easily interpreted or applied by landholders or contractors. The review should consider redesigning the code to make it a more practical document with simplified prescriptions. The Tasmanian Forest Practices Code provides clear examples of how prescriptions are to be implemented and could be a good template for a redesign of the NSW PNF code.

### Silvicultural operations - Harvesting limits (Part 3.1 of Southern PNF Code)

Table A: "Minimum stand basal areas for single tree selection and thinning operations" is fundamentally flawed.

Retention rates set out in Table A of the Code are more onerous than basal area retained in similar operations on State Forests on the South Coast of NSW

While the minimum basal areas contained in Table A, may be appropriate for the highest site quality of some forest types, the two tiered minimum basal areas prescribed, fail to adequately take account of the wide range of site qualities which occur within each forest type in NSW.

Most coastal forests in south east NSW fall into the “South Coast Ash/Stringybark” category on Table A: “Minimum stand basal areas for single tree selection and thinning operations”.

The pre logging basal area of these forests typically range from 20m<sup>2</sup> to 30m<sup>2</sup> with the majority of them exceeding 25m stand height. In a forest that has a basal area of 20m<sup>2</sup> and a stand height >25m the minimum stand basal area retention from Table A would be 18m<sup>2</sup>. This equates to 10% removal. Such operations are commercially unviable and will not support the growth and development of healthy regrowth forests.

A forest that has a basal area of 30m<sup>2</sup> and a stand height >25m the minimum stand basal area retention from Table A would again be 18m<sup>2</sup>. This equates to a more commercially viable basal area removal of 40%, but still may not optimise overall stand health and catchment water yield.

DECCW Silvicultural Guidelines (2010) state: *“It is important to note that the minimum stand basal areas for single tree selection and thinning operations set by the PNF Code for the various broad forest types are not optimum basal areas. Rather they are minimum disturbance thresholds that have been developed by taking all forest values into account and should not be seen as optimum silvicultural targets. When developing silvicultural prescriptions (Section 6) the emphasis should be on keeping all quality trees that are judged capable of further growth. However, while it is unrealistic to set specific silvicultural basal area targets for native forests, it is useful to have some appreciation of the range of what may be optimum (Table 3)”*.

The Code should utilise this table rather than imposing minimum basal area limits (particularly in stands with >25m stand height) that are outside the optimum range. The aim of the silvicultural prescriptions and the Code should be to maintain or improve stand health and productivity.

A failure to develop a table with a wider range of residual basal areas which reflect stand type and productivity level will have a major impact on the viability of harvesting operations due to the restrictive parameters set within Table A.

It is recommended that the basal area limits should not have a stand height threshold. If the restrictive two level approach is retained, then the threshold in Table A should be increased from 25m to at least 30m.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Private Native Forest Code review. ANWE looks forward to the outcomes of review and would be willing to contribute further if the opportunity arises.

Regards

Kel Henry  
General Manager, ANWE

## PNF Code of Practice for Southern NSW

PNF CODE PART	DESCRIPTION
<b>PNF CODE – GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	
Disclaimer should be removed. Landholders and contractors are asked to abide by the Code of Practice, Government should also stand by the Code.	
Move Glossary to the front and rebadge of definitions to improve ease of use and application.	
Refer to Tasmanian forestry regulation as positive case study. Tasmania has independent body that provides advice on interpretation of the Code, and specialists that provide on-ground advice.	
There should be a separate PNF Division in the NSW Government.	
A field guide to the Code for silviculture methods, landscape and drainage features and species identification would be a valuable tool to support extension services.	
Low-intensity harvest operations discussed – not common in Southern NSW but considered that alternative pathway for small-scale operations may be beneficial.	
PNF regulation should allow for active and adaptive management, which differs from approaches to protect land by excluding access and management.	
Readability of the Code is low, and the way the prescriptions are written is unlikely to meet its intended outcomes	
Update references to outdated legislation throughout.	
All mention of 'logging' should be changed to 'harvesting' to more accurately reflect forest management practices.	
Include definition of forest to ensure consistent application of the Code	

## PNF Code of Practice for Southern NSW

<b>PNF CODE - 1 - INTRODUCTION</b>	
Object: “maintaining non-wood values at or above target levels considered necessary by society”	Target values not defined, may be a higher standard than that used by National Parks.  Should acknowledge differences between private land and state forest.
<b>PNF CODE - 1 - INTRODUCTION</b>	
Broadscale clearing	Assessment of broadscale clearing for PNF - no longer relevant; should remove all references to clearing.
Minor variation of Code	Some discretion for minor variations to the Code should be retained. This will enable site scale variations to the Codes where alternative harvest practices could improve the environmental and forest management outcomes. impact. This change will also enable the Code to be responsive to new scientific evidence and forest management practices.
<b>PNF CODE - 2 - FOREST OPERATION PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT</b>	
2.1 Forest Operation Plan	Alignment with state forestry naming conventions discussed. Contractors are often familiar with a 'harvest plan', but not a 'forest operation plan'. Advantage in keeping names different as a way to acknowledge important differences between private and public tenure.  Some contractors use an app to display FOP spatial data in the field. Others use FOP pro-forma provided by the EPA, but add sections as needed (e.g. safety provisions).
<b>PNF CODE - 3 - SILVICULTURAL OPTIONS</b>	
General comments	Stocking is too prescriptive – should allow variations on case by case basis to maximise land management outcomes, especially when these may improve fauna habitat quality. For instance Bush

## PNF Code of Practice for Southern NSW

	Heritage Australia land management for plains-wanderer given as one example.
<b>PNF CODE - 3 - SILVICULTURAL OPTIONS</b>	
3.1 Single tree selection and thinning	<p>Refer to how Tasmanian Codes define a stand.</p> <p>Most landholders and operators don't understand basal area. May be value in referring to the trees to be retained only (e.g. H &amp; R trees). Operators often convert BA to tree spacing in relation to 'boom reach'.</p>
3.1 (1) Single tree selection and thinning Table A: Minimum stand basal areas for single tree selection and thinning operations	<p>Lower site quality STA/ SB required to retain higher BA than high site quality ash. BA needs to reflect site capacity and silvicultural requirements.</p> <p>State forest doesn't have different BA based on stand height, and asked to consolidate BA to one measure per forest type only. BA should be 12m<sup>2</sup>/ha across all forest types.</p> <p>BA of 18m<sup>2</sup>/ha for south coast ash/stringybark stands &gt;25m is too high.</p>
3.2 Australian Group selection	Small circles have significant impacts on regeneration growth rates. Larger gaps should be allowed but retention of tree hollows prescribed within gaps.
3.3 Regeneration and stocking	Should only apply to AGS or forest resets.
3.3 (3) Regeneration and stocking	Should not need to do regeneration assessments after thinning or with minimum basal area of 12m <sup>2</sup> /ha as there is already a forest structure in place.
3.3 (5) Regeneration and stocking	LLS should have responsibility for making requirements for regenerating or re-establishing the forest.

PNF Code of Practice for Southern NSW

General comments	Should be an outcomes-based approach to allow flexibility in landscape and threatened species management.
<b>PNF CODE - 4 - PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT</b>	
4.1 (2)	Old growth mapping for both southern and northern NSW should be revised, as they have found to be inaccurate over state forest. Some areas are mapped as old growth but do not contain old growth on the ground.
4.1 Table C: requirements for protecting landscape features - Rocky Outcrops	Definition of rocky outcrop is unclear and can lead to compliance risk.
4.1 Table A: requirements for protecting landscape features	Heathland – does not account for management, protection, ecological burns
4.1 Table C: requirements for protecting landscape features - Cliffs	Definition of Cliffs is unclear and can lead to significant compliance risk.
4.2 Protection of habitat and biodiversity	Dead trees should count towards retained hollow trees, given their known use by fauna.
<b>PNF CODE - 4 - PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT</b>	
4.2 (5) Protection of	Some clarification need as to why there was a preference for trees with minimal butt damage.

PNF Code of Practice for Southern NSW

habitat and biodiversity	
4.2 Protection of habitat and biodiversity Table D: Minimum standards for tree retention	Text is difficult to understand and interpret – needs simplification.  Keep “where available”, as some areas do not have a combined total of 20 hollow and recruitment trees/ 2ha.
<b>PNF CODE - 4 - PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT</b>	
4.2 Protection of habitat and biodiversity Table E: Feed trees	Difficult for landholder to apply –pictures would be more useful.
4.3 (1) and (2) Minimising damage to retained trees	“Protected trees” needs to be defined. Branches broken in the heads of recruitment trees promote earlier hollow formation.
4.3 (3) Minimising damage to retained trees	(Regarding <i>Allocasuarina</i> sp.) Oaks can be a fire weed and out-compete overstorey and understorey species that provide greater habitat value.
4.4 Drainage feature protection – general comments	Mapping of watercourses does not always correlate with what’s on the ground. There should be a pathway to address mapping errors.  Guidance around drainage feature protection is too complex, and needs simplifying.
4.4 (1) Table F: Riparian exclusion and riparian buffer zones	Clarification need on why there is a need for an additional buffer, and whether management fires were permitted within the additional buffer.  Exclusion zones should be aligned with what is permitted under allowable clearing.
4.4 (2) (a) Drainage feature protection	The point where the riparian exclusion zone is measured is hidden amongst text in 4.4 (4), and should be clear and upfront.
4.4 (2) (a) Drainage feature protection – snig	Clause is confusing – needs clarification.

PNF Code of Practice for Southern NSW

track construction within buffer zone	
4.4 (7) Drainage feature protection – tree felled into riparian buffer zone	Should be option to remove crown, subject to minimal soil and understorey disturbance. Leaving crown increase fuel load.
<b>PNF CODE - 5 - CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF FOREST INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	
5. Construction and maintenance of forest infrastructure – general comments	Needs alignment with allowable clearing.  There is a variance in motives between contractors and landholders; contractors aim to minimise road construction while landholders often want more access roads.
5.1.1 (1) (c) Road drainage – crossfall drain slope	Loaded truck stability needs to be considered
5.2.2 Snig track and extraction track crossings on drainage features (5)	Change wording to “crossbank or equivalent structures” to allow for rubber flap drains and roll over banks
<b>PNF CODE - LISTED SPECIES ECOLOGICAL PRESCRIPTIONS</b>	
Giant burrowing frog (b): no post-harvest burns must occur in the exclusion zone	Questions about how this species survived under aboriginal land management
Brush-tailed phascogale (c): contain den or roost sites within buffer zones	Define how/ from what these trees should be protected
Southern brown bandicoot	Why should private growers be punished for population declines in national parks and reserves.



## PNF Code of Practice for Southern NSW

Long-footed potoroo	Questions around the evidence of their occurrence in NSW.
Koala	Harvesting is the only manageable broad-scale regeneration tool available, and that abnormally high koala populations are generally associated with young regrowth forests or old forest dominated by epicormic crowns, in chronic decline.
Broad-headed snake	Species may be in decline due to lack of sunshine in core habitat areas.
<b>PNF CODE - LISTED SPECIES ECOLOGICAL PRESCRIPTIONS</b>	
Powerful owl, masked owl, sooty owl, barking owl (b): disturbance to understorey vegetation and debris must be minimised	Questions about how this requirement and its relationship to maintaining habitat and food resources for powerful owls. Barking owls need open space to access ground prey.
Bush stone-curlew	No requirement to control predators
Threatened flora – A: 50m exclusion zone	Does not account for disturbance specialists. Burning would be allowed for ecological reasons.
<b>Glossary</b>	
Ecological logging regime	Good concept, but only gets small mention in Table C (Requirements for protective landscape features; ecological harvesting plan). Approval costs are prohibitive.
Rocky outcrops	Definition is overly-conservative and difficult to interpret on the ground