Plantations Regulation
Overview of plantation authorisation requirements and available information

Introduction

The Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999 (the Act) and Plantations and Reafforestation (Code) Regulation 2001 regulate plantations on private and crown land. The Act and Code are administered by the Plantations Regulation Unit (PRU) of the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) as delegated by the Minister administering the Act and the Secretary of Department of Regional NSW. The Act requires all plantations greater than 30 hectares in area to be authorised and comply with environmental standards for establishing and managing the plantation.

The purpose of the Act is to:
- facilitate the reafforestation of land, and
- promote and facilitate development for timber plantations on essentially cleared land, and
- codify best practice environmental standards, and provide a streamlined and integrated scheme, for the establishment, management and harvesting of timber and other forest plantations,

consistently with the principles of ecologically sustainable development (as described in section 6 (2) of the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991).

For the purposes of the Act a plantation is an area of land on which the predominant number of trees or shrubs forming, or expected to form, the canopy are trees or shrubs that have been planted (whether by sowing seed or otherwise):
- for the purpose of timber production, or
- the protection of the environment, or
- for any other purpose, but not principally for the purpose of the production of food or any other farm produce other than timber.

Public register

The Act requires the Minister (or delegate) to maintain a public register of authorised plantations including the identity of the plantation and description of its location. The Minister may also include any other matters considered appropriate.

The public register of plantations authorisations can be viewed at:

DPI – Plantations Regulation website

More information about the specifics of a plantation authorisation, including any applicable conditions, can be obtained via the PRU email address, forests@dpi.nsw.gov.au.
What if I am a neighbour of a plantation?

While the Act does not require plantation owners/managers to formally consult with adjoining land owners, communication with neighbours regarding plantation operations is encouraged. Information about the requirements of the Code can be found on the DPI Plantations Regulation website. You may also contact your local Plantation Assessment Officer for more information or to discuss the plantation operations. You can also discuss the plantation operations and cross boundary management with the adjoining land owner/manager.

DPI provides some guidance to plantation owners and managers on managing relationships with neighbours. Refer to the Plantations Regulation – Working with plantation neighbours information sheet for more information.

Purchasing land

Information regarding the presence of a plantation on parcels of land to be purchased or adjoining parcels of land can be obtained from the PRU by contacting your local Plantation Assessment Officer or emailing forests@dpi.nsw.gov.au. A purchaser may also seek a planning certificate for legal certainty regarding the plantation authorisation and infrastructure contribution liabilities if relevant. The application form for a plantation certificate is available on the DPI Plantations website.

Conditions an authorisation is subject to under the Act

All new complying plantations authorised under the Act must be established and operated in accordance with the Plantations and Reafforestation (Code) Regulation 2001. The Code sets out limitations and operation standards to protect the environment and manage risks such as soil erosion. Non-complying plantations undergo additional assessment and may have conditions applied to the authorisation for mitigation of any risks.

The Code contains limitations and conditions with respect of standards for establishment operations and regulation of management and harvesting operations (where applicable).

Standards for establishment of the plantation include standards relating to:

- The protection of soil and water
- The protection of places, objects or items of heritage significance
- The protection of biodiversity
- Bushfire risk mitigation

Regulation of management operations includes:

- Operational plans, records and data
- Regulation of roads and tracks
- Site management
- Protection of places, objects and items of heritage significance
- Managing progressive planting
- Managing retained areas of native vegetation

Regulation of harvest operations (for timber plantations only) includes:

- Slope limits for harvesting operations
- Regulation of log dumps and landings
- Protection of buffer zones
- Restoration of harvested areas
- Regulation of timber extraction
- Wet weather provisions

The PRU work with plantations owners and managers to achieve best practice management of plantation operations. The PRU also undertake an audit program to monitor and manage compliance with the Code.