



The Hon Mark Furner MP
Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries
and Minister for Rural Communities

Our ref: CTS 16182/23
Your ref: A1147876

21 September 2023

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 25 August 2023 regarding Petition Number 3935-23 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning native timber harvesting at Deongwar State Forest.

Native timber harvesting in Queensland's State forests must meet the requirements of the *Code of practice for native forest timber production on Queensland's state forest estate 2020* (the Code) which is administered and overseen by the Department of Environment and Science. All applicable Queensland environment and heritage laws, such as the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*, and the Federal Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1992*, must also be adhered to.

Clear-felling is not permitted under the Code. Native timber harvesting in Queensland's State forests is done using selective harvesting practices, which involves the harvesting of only those trees that meet certain commercial requirements. Queensland's native hardwood forests are well adapted to selective harvesting because they have a store of advanced regeneration that is ready to respond when there is more access to sunlight and soil nutrients.

During harvesting more than half of the standing forest is retained, including those trees that must be retained for habitat or for other purposes under the Code. The Code requires that all regional ecosystems are appropriately managed to ensure their ecological integrity is protected. Ecological processes, health, vitality, and their ability to regenerate and respond to impacts must also be maintained.

For those native forests within the greater glider habitat range, the Code requires that at least six habitat trees and two recruitment habitat trees are retained per hectare, in addition to other tree retention requirements. Habitat trees must have at least one visible hollow over 10 centimetres in diameter. Where six habitat trees are unavailable, additional recruitment habitat trees must be retained. These recruitment trees are usually smaller than habitat trees but have attributes that will likely form hollows and become future habitat trees.

Under the Native Timber Action Plan, the Queensland Government has committed to ending native timber harvesting in State forests in the South East Queensland Regional Plan area by 31 December 2024, including Deongwar State Forest.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Furner'.

MARK FURNER MP

**Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and
Minister for Rural Communities**