

PUBLIC SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The Independent Forestry Panel (**Panel**) has been appointed to lead consultation on a Forestry Industry Action Plan. The Panel is tasked with consulting and reporting to Government on the best options to achieve the balance between sustainable supplies of timber and NSW's environmental commitments.

The Panel is seeking views on the sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW. This includes forest conservation, public and private native forestry, softwood and hardwood plantations, different land tenure and management regimes, timber supply, and non-timber forest uses such as recreation, cattle grazing, apiculture and others.

As part of the stakeholder consultation process, the Panel sought written public submissions, with a public submission period open on 12 September 2024 and closing on 13 October 2024.

How to lodge a submission

During the notified period, submissions were able to be lodged by entering a submission as text in the 'Make a Submission' online form, hosted on the website of the Office of the Independent Planning Commission.

The Panel may use questions or topic areas in the 'Make a Submission' form to assist you in providing a structure to your submission. Following this structure will help the Panel respond to some of the issues the Government has identified for inclusion in its Forestry Industry Action Plan.

Although submissions that respond to questions or topic areas provided by the Panel are useful to the Panel, a submission that doesn't follow this structure will also be accepted and considered by the Panel.

If your submission includes citations of evidence from published reports, please include full references for those materials.

The Panel may not accept submissions unless the submission is received directly from the person making the submission – submissions made via a third party may not be considered in the Panel.

Any submissions that contain inappropriate language or make defamatory or potentially defamatory allegations may be redacted, not published, or referred to the appropriate authorities.

All duly made and accepted submissions are submissions to the Panel for the purpose of informing the Panel in its deliberations. Although people making submissions are permitted to refer to already published submissions made by other people, the purpose of a submission is to give the person's views on the matter under consideration by the Panel – not to comment on other submissions.

Do I have to use the online form on the 'Make a Submission' portal?

To directly inform the Panel on the issues the Government has identified for inclusion in its Forestry Industry Action Plan and to assist the Panel in processing and considering your submission, the structure provided by the online form is the Panel's preferred method of receiving submissions. The Panel may also elect to use natural language processing and other analytical tools to assist in evaluating large volumes of submissions.

If you prefer not to use the online form, you also

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have the option of uploading your submission and up to two supporting documents as attachments in either PDF, DOCX, JPG or XLS format to the 'Make a Submission' portal. If you wish to submit multiple images, please combine them into a single PDF or DOCX file.

If you wish to provide your submission or supporting documents as a .PDF attachment please provide the document as an unlocked file. Alternatively, if you created a protected or locked .PDF of your submission using Adobe, please select the Adobe security setting option to 'enable copying of text, images and other contents'. Selecting this box in your Adobe security settings will assist the Panel in quickly accessing its content when reviewing specific issues.

The Panel may accept a postal submission, however, any submission made by post must be received by the Panel prior to the relevant deadline for submissions. Submissions sent but not received by the deadline for submissions will be treated as late submissions and may not be able to be considered by the Panel. Email submissions will not be accepted by the Panel.

Can I send a form letter or sign a petition instead?

The Panel is assisted by substantive submissions. Multiple non-unique submissions, typically lodged as form letters, email campaigns, or petitions, do not necessarily provide the Panel with useful information. The Panel may not publish form letters, email campaigns, petitions and other such types of submissions. Alternatively, the Panel may choose to publish only a representative example of any such submissions it receives.

Sending multiple copies of a submission

Please do not send multiple copies of the same submission to the Panel. The Panel will not accept duplicates of the same submission.

Will my submission be made public?

Submissions provided to the Panel will be considered public documents and made publicly available on the Panel's website. The Panel also reserves the right to not publish your submission or to make any redactions to your submission prior to publication that it sees fit.

Please do not include any information in your submission that you do not want to be published. If you make your submission through the online form in the 'Make a Submission' portal on the Independent Planning Commission's website, you may elect to have your name and address withheld.

If you include your name and address or any other personal information in any attachments (whether your submission or supporting documents) that you upload, this may be published in full. The 'Make a Submission' form also collects general information that helps the Panel to process your submission, including your location, and whether you are making a submission on behalf of an organisation or in another capacity.

When a submission is lodged through the online 'Make a Submission' portal, only the submission itself, any supporting documents, and – if you consent – your name, organisation and suburb is published on the website. Other information captured by the online form on the 'Make a Submission' portal is not published.

If you wish to provide your submission or supplementary documents as an attachment or by post, please do not include any personal details or private information in your attachment as this will not be redacted. If the file name of your submission contains personal information such as your name, this will be displayed in the URL of your submission online. If you do not wish to have your name shown, please save your document without any identifying features in the document name.

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If your name and postcode is supplied to the Panel but you request that it is not published along with your submission, please note that the Panel may subsequently be required by law to disclose any personal information it has, even in respect of such submission published without identifying information.

Protecting personal information

When dealing with the Panel, your personal information is protected under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

Your personal information relates to you personally and includes any information or opinion made about you. Personal information includes your name, address, phone number, email address or any information from which your identity can be reasonably ascertained. Section 4 of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* defines “personal information” in more detail.

Information is not personal information if it:

- can already be found in a publicly available publication
- is in a public register
- is about someone who’s been deceased for over 30 years
- relates to certain law enforcement and/or investigation activities
- is found in Government Cabinet documents
- can be disclosed under another piece of legislation.

The Panel will only collect personal information that is directly related to the work of the Panel and reasonably necessary for it, for a lawful purpose. There is no legal requirement to provide personal information to the Panel.

If a person chooses to engage with the Panel and in doing so provides their personal information to the Panel, some ways in which that personal information may be used include:

- contacting you about the work of the Panel, including invitations to further consultation
- clarifying details mentioned in your submission
- internal analysis of submissions, such as using your personal information to give context to your submission (e.g., your geographical location)
- seeking feedback about the work of the Panel
- providing information to relevant third parties so they support the functions of the Panel.

Under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* you have the right to access and edit your own personal information we hold if that information is inaccurate.

If you feel there’s been a breach of your privacy or of the information protection principles under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*, you have the right to make a seek an internal review by the Office of the Independent Planning Commission as the secretariat to the Panel. Part 6 of the *Independent Planning Commission’s [Privacy Statement](#)* sets out how the review will be carried out.

Can I request that my submission be kept confidential?

Only in exceptional circumstances will the Panel consider accepting wholly or partially confidential submissions, i.e. submissions that are not made public on the Panel’s website.

If you believe your submission should be treated as confidential, before sending your submission to the Panel, please write to the Panel setting out why your submission should be confidential – including what category of confidential material it fits and why the Panel should be satisfied that it would be in the public interest to restrict publication of your submission. Any such request must be received at least three business days before the end of the relevant submission period

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in order to allow the Panel to make a decision on your request in a timely manner.

Do not provide any submission which you wish to request confidentiality to the Panel until the Panel confirms to you if it will keep that specific submission confidential. If you have not first requested and obtained the Panel's agreement to keep your submission confidential, any submission received may be published by the Panel without further notice to you.

Please also note that any submission (or request for confidentiality) received by the Panel is capable of being a state record and may be disclosed without further notice to you by operation of law (for example, under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 or pursuant to a Court process).

How long do I have to make a submission?

The closing date for submissions is advertised on the Independent Forestry Panel case page, which is hosted on the Independent Planning Commission's website.

The Panel will close public submissions at 11:59pm Sydney time on the final date for submissions as advertised on the website. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Panel choose to accept a late submission. Please check the website for the closing date and time, and do not rely on third party or media information about deadlines.