

## Transparency Statement

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 using a number of methods to seek stakeholder 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, apiculture and others.

### **The Panel's approach to transparency**

The Panel's role is to report to the NSW Government. It will be a matter for the NSW Government to determine whether that report is made public.

In conducting its consultations, the Panel aims to be as transparent with the public as possible about its process and the information it considers, noting that this transparency must be balanced with other important considerations.

These considerations include:

- protecting, where appropriate, the confidentiality of material that may be:
  - capable of identifying someone who wishes to remain anonymous (or disclosing any other personal information about someone)
  - culturally sensitive information
  - commercially sensitive information
  - part of a Cabinet process
- ensuring that the Panel can consider potentially sensitive internal Government information, disclosure of which may prejudice Government functions
- not disclosing any views or deliberations of the Panel prior to the Panel reporting to the NSW Government
- ensuring that the work of the Panel or participating Government agencies is not taken out of context or mischaracterised

- not prejudicing the conduct, effectiveness or integrity of any research or analysis commissioned or relied upon by the Panel
- not facilitating:
  - allegations against, or criticism or abuse of individuals
  - untested or unsubstantiated allegations of wrongdoing (noting that the Panel is not an investigative or enforcement body for such allegations)
  - the use of threatening, abusive, or inappropriate language
  - any breach or potential breach of confidence
  - publication of potentially defamatory materials
  - any attempt to use the Panel's processes for a purpose other than the Panel's functions.

### **How the Panel will be transparent**

Although the Panel's starting point is to be as transparent as possible about its processes and the information it considers, the methods used will vary depending on circumstances including:

- the considerations set out in this Statement
- any directions from the NSW Government
- any applicable legal requirements, and
- the discretion and sound judgment of the Panel

## Public submission procedures

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The Panel has already committed to publishing duly made written submissions and may additionally, where appropriate, publish:

- transcripts of some meetings
- materials presented to the Commission
- notes or other records of consultation carried out by the Panel
- information about research commissioned by or otherwise relied upon by the Panel.

Subject to the considerations in this Statement, the Panel has the discretion to publish, not publish or publish with redactions any materials it receives. Typically, the Panel will make a decision to publish, not publish or publish with redactions any material without further notice to whoever has supplied that information to the Panel.

Although the Panel is being supported in a secretariat capacity by staff of the Office of the Independent Planning Commission, the Independent Planning Commission itself has no role in the work of the Panel. Accordingly, the Independent Planning Commission's *Transparency Policy* does not apply to the work of the Independent Forestry Panel.

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