

Media Release

Wednesday 26 March
PR/052/08



Farmers forestry privacy

The NSW Farmers' Association says it is concerned the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) is attempting to gain access to farmers' private information contained in their Private Native Forestry Property Vegetation Plan (PNF PVP).

A PNF PVP is a legally binding agreement between a landholder and the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC). The Private Native Forestry Code of Practice sets the minimum operating standards for harvesting in private native forests.

NSW Farmers' Association Conservation and Resource Management Committee Chair Louise Burge says the Association has received information that the EDO is seeking access under the Freedom of Information Act to private information contained within the PVP's for around 16 NSW properties.

"We are recommending that farmers respond urgently if they have any concerns about the details of their PVP and forestry activities being released," Mrs Burge said.

"If you don't want this to happen, you must immediately contact DECC to object to the release of your details to another party. If you don't do this, your details will be released," she said.

Farmers have entered into good faith PVP arrangements to conduct forestry operations in conjunction with the new PNF code. This code determines the forestry activities and the personal details to these activities should not be made public.

"The PNF Code is publicly available as are certain aspects of private forestry operations, such as GPS coordinates. If at any stage the public has concerns, they can conform with DECC that forestry activities are subject to the Code," Mrs Burge said.

Farmers who have entered a PNF PVP can contact the Association for further assistance.

"It is disappointing that elements opposed to legitimate forestry activities can undermine the confidence and process entered into by both the private landholders, and the State Government," Mrs Burge concluded.

Contact:

Ellen McNamara (Media Officer) 0429 990 218
Amanda Barwick (Media Manager) 0428 400 736

Fast Fact: Western Division comprises some 32.5 million hectares, representing 42% of the land area in NSW, and is populated by only 52 830 people

