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Project Manager
Rural Water Use Strategy Project

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DRAFT RURAL WATER USE STRATEGY

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Rural Water Use Strategy.

Private Forests Tasmania is an independent statutory authority established under the *Private Forests Act 1994*. We work to facilitate and expand the sustainable growth and development of the private forest resource in Tasmania. Under our [Corporate Plan 2020-23](#) one of our goals is to work with policy makers and regulators to improve regulatory efficiency and practical policy settings for private forestry.

In early 2020 the Australian Government reviewed a suite of regulations which help govern the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF). The ERF is a voluntary national scheme that provides incentives for farmers and landholders to mitigate climate change by, amongst other things, planting trees to sequester carbon. One of the amendments which came about as a result of the review was the removal of the water interception rule (600 mm rule) in the north of Tasmania. Prior to its removal in northern Tasmania the water interception rule acted as an additional barrier for many Tasmanian farmers and landowners to undertake ERF tree planting projects. Private Forests Tasmania has long advocated for the removal of the rule across all of Tasmania and we are pleased to note that the Australian Government is now formally assessing the proposal to remove this barrier in southern Tasmania. The Tasmanian Minister for Resources fully supports this position.

While the Draft Rural Water Use Strategy does not specifically address the water interception rule, Private Forests Tasmania would not like to see any further strategies, plans or actions that follow the implementation of the Rural Water Use Strategy, that inadvertently or otherwise act as a disincentive for farmers and landowners to plant trees. Trees can not only improve the carbon balance, they deliver increased primary productivity, improve water quality and efficiency and deliver biofuel while simultaneously growing high value timber products. Our [Tree Alliance](#) campaign aims to raise awareness of farm forestry and the benefits of trees on farms, and to encourage and facilitate farmers to plant commercially viable trees in the agricultural landscape.



Private Forests Tasmania

Private Forests Tasmania generally supports the reforms to the water management framework proposed in the draft Strategy and looks forward to continued cooperation with DPIPWE to further develop private forestry integrated with agriculture in Tasmania.

Yours sincerely,



Penny Wells
CEO
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