

SWS Forestry

Dear Sirs

I am an employee of SWS Forestry Services, my role involves organizing the purchase / sale of lands for planting purposes. I deal with a wide variety of landowners who for one reason or another wish to sell a parcel of land that's really only suitable for afforestation. I introduce buyers who are more than willing to proceed once the land is approved. The difficulties / delays in getting decisions are having a major impact on our business, but more importantly are having a major impact upon our vendor / purchaser clients.

Everyone involved in the Forestry Industry is well aware of the need to protect our environment, none of us want a situation whereby our actions are detrimental to its future enjoyment by the generations that will follow us. It need not be an "us and them" scenario in relation to the arguments being submitted by those that want to delay the approval process.

To help resolve matters can you consider following small change;

- Making allowances for timely decisions on all applications relevant to projects less than 10 HA (within max 10 weeks), let such decisions be refusals if needs be, but provide for decisions to be made. If refused, a landowner can have a right to appeal and provide greater level of information to support such appeal.
- Only allow adjoining landowners or anyone with property within 60m of the proposed development to make an appeal against the granting of a licence for an application less than 10 HA.

In adopting this approach, time and resources will be more available to properly scrutinize applications in excess of 10 HA – this should enable timely decisions to be made in relation to all approval / appeal decisions. If genuine objections are raised, these can and should be properly heard and adjudicated on by a FAC that's properly set up to hear the appeal within a set 2 month timeframe.

It's the lack of a proper decision making approval / appeal system that's causing the anxiety among the people that I'm on contact with, not the decision that's made.

Please do something to resolve the present situation, it's an absolute disaster as it is.

Rgds

SWS FORESTRY