

AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PTY LIMITED (AFM)

## 2004 SOFTWOOD PROJECT



**2016-2017 Annual Report**

## Legal Context

This annual report has been prepared in accordance with Schedule 1 Part 3(h) of the Forestry Management Contract between Australian Forestry Management Pty Limited and the Forestry Commission of New South Wales (now known as the Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW)) for the 2004 Softwood Project.

## Background

The 2004 Softwood Project comprises two properties – Dr Vance and The Valley – which are both located within the Tumut Management Area (TMA) of Snowy Region.

## Plantation Area Review

A review of the net stocked area of plantation within the 2004 Softwood Project was undertaken in June 2015 (Table 1). This plantation area review captured mortality and natural attrition that has occurred since plantation establishment.

**Table 1 –Net Stocked Area 2015**

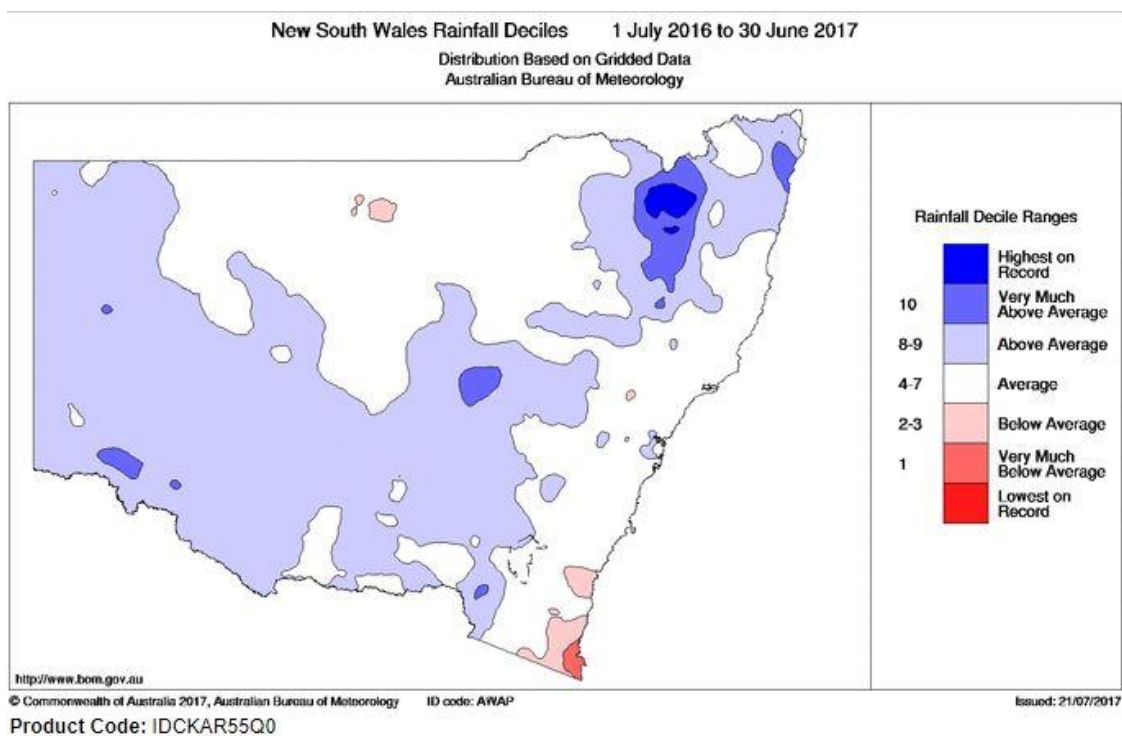
<b>Plantation</b>	<b>Net Stocked Area in 2015 (ha)</b>
Dr Vance	92.5
The Valley*	752.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>844.5</b>

\*Includes 8.3ha of 2012 age class, replanted due to fire damage.

The updated net stocked area which includes Forestry Right Land and Adjoining Land constitutes a change of minus 4.4% from planting.

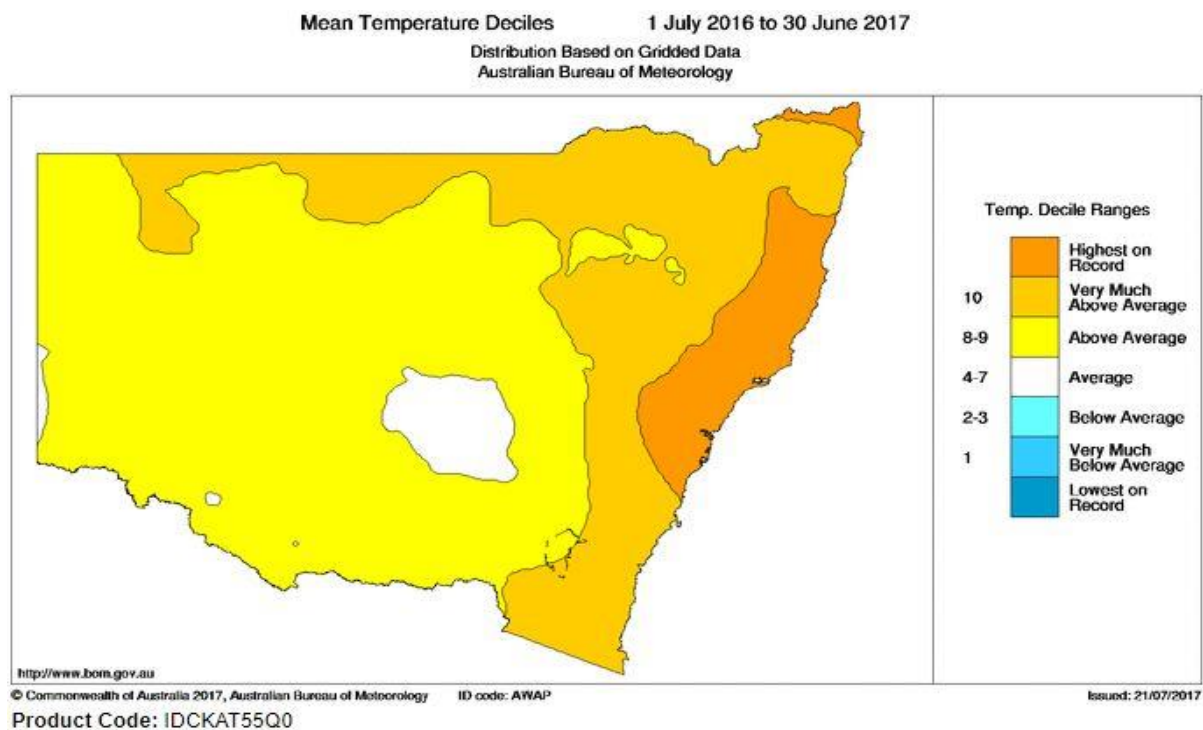
## Growing Season

Rainfall in the Tumut management area was above average during the reporting period (Figure 1) with a very wet winter and spring in 2016 and a relatively dry autumn in 2017. Total rainfall at Tumbarumba for 2016-17 was 1025 mm compared to the long-term average of 978 mm. Rainfall for Burrinjuck Dam was 1078 mm compared to a long term average of 927 mm (refer Annexure A).



**FIGURE 1 – NEW SOUTH WALES RAINFALL DECILES – 2016-2017**

Mean temperatures were above average (Figure 2).



**FIGURE 2 – NEW SOUTH WALES TEMPERATURE DECILES – 2016-2017**

## Stand Condition

### Dr Vance

In line with previous reports, the Dr Vance plantation continues to perform very well, with trees displaying superior growth and form.



**Figure 3 and 4: Dr Vance (2005 Age Class) Aug 2017 – good growth, excellent tree form and healthy trees**

## The Valley

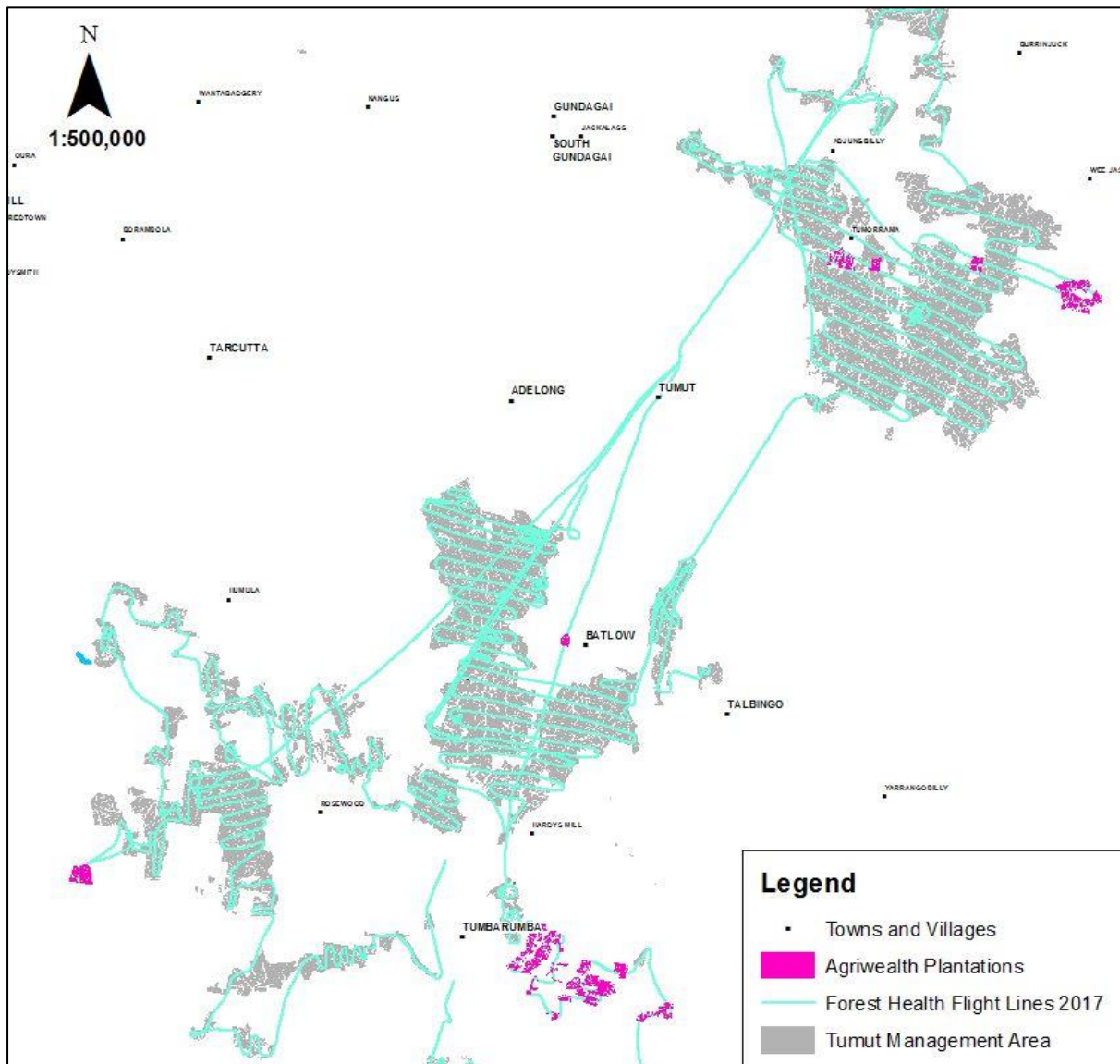
There has been no significant changes to the overall condition of The Valley plantation, which continues to maintain good growth over the majority of the plantation and above average performance where stocking is adequate, particularly on lower and mid slope sites. The majority of the plantation has reasonable tree form, which is gradually improving with tree age, however, it is noted that in areas where there is lower stocking tree form is generally much poorer.



**Figure 5: The Valley (2005 Age Class) – good growth over majority of the plantation area**

# Forest Health & Biosecurity

Aerial forest health surveillance was undertaken in late June 2017 (Figure 6) and followed up with ground inspections. Preliminary reporting indicates no significant forest health issues are presenting in the 2004 Softwood Project properties.



**Figure 6: Forest health aerial surveillance flight paths over Tumut plantations – June 2017.**

Pest animals are present on all properties, but are not causing any significant damage due to the size and height of the trees. No other significant issues were identified.

*Dothistroma* needle blight is present in The Valley in low levels, similar to other plantation areas in the region. Infection levels are generally low following seasonally dry conditions

during late summer and early autumn. Treatment of *Dothistroma* is not recommended for the low level of infection currently observed.

Sirex wood wasp is present throughout plantations in Southern Australia, with infestation identified in The Valley during 2015. The Valley and Dr Vance properties are included in FCNSW's routine control program to release and monitor biological control agents.

## Operational Activities

Fire trail, road maintenance and noxious weed control has been undertaken on an as-need basis.

## Fire Incidents

There were no fire incidents within or nearby to the 2004 Softwood Project plantations.

## Harvest Planning

Forestry Corporation has completed strategic planning of the roading network that will be required in The Valley to facilitate log haulage for first thinning. This has included consultation and agreement with Agriweath Pty Ltd for providing off property access, where this is required, to access the main road network.

## Other Management Issues

Thinning is currently scheduled to commence during financial year 2019.

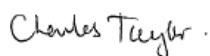
The residual effects of the significant replant program in the first three years of the plantation establishment has resulted in ongoing variation in tree size and stocking. Generally, growth in subsequent years has been significant, however it is anticipated that there may be some impact on the future productivity (timber yield) of these areas. Specifically, there are some localised areas of low stocking and lower height growth that will affect the final productivity and value recovery of timber yield.

There are some areas of up to 10 hectares of 2005 AC plantation that is severely under stocked due to wet and swampy ground conditions and very heavy blackberry regrowth. These sites are not considered practical to replant as it is likely that poor survival of seedlings on these sites will preclude successful plantation establishment. These affected areas were originally reported in the 2008-09 report.

## Planned Activities for 2017/2018

- Aerial and ground forest health surveillance
- Maintenance of tracks and access roads
- Fire risk reduction works and surveillance
- Detailed harvest planning and preparation activity to facilitate 1<sup>st</sup> thinning

### Report Prepared by



**Charlie Taylor**

STEWARDSHIP AND FIRE MANAGER

SNOWY REGION

### Monthly Rainfall Statistics

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