

AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PTY LIMITED (AFM)

2004 SOFTWOOD PROJECT



2017-2018 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

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

*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 (TMA) was below average during the reporting period (Figure 1) with average rainfall in the latter half of 2017 and a very dry autumn in 2018. Total rainfall at Tumbarumba for 2017-18 was 797 mm compared to the long-term average of 976 mm. Rainfall for Burrinjuck Dam was 791 mm compared to a long term average of 927 mm (refer Annexure A).

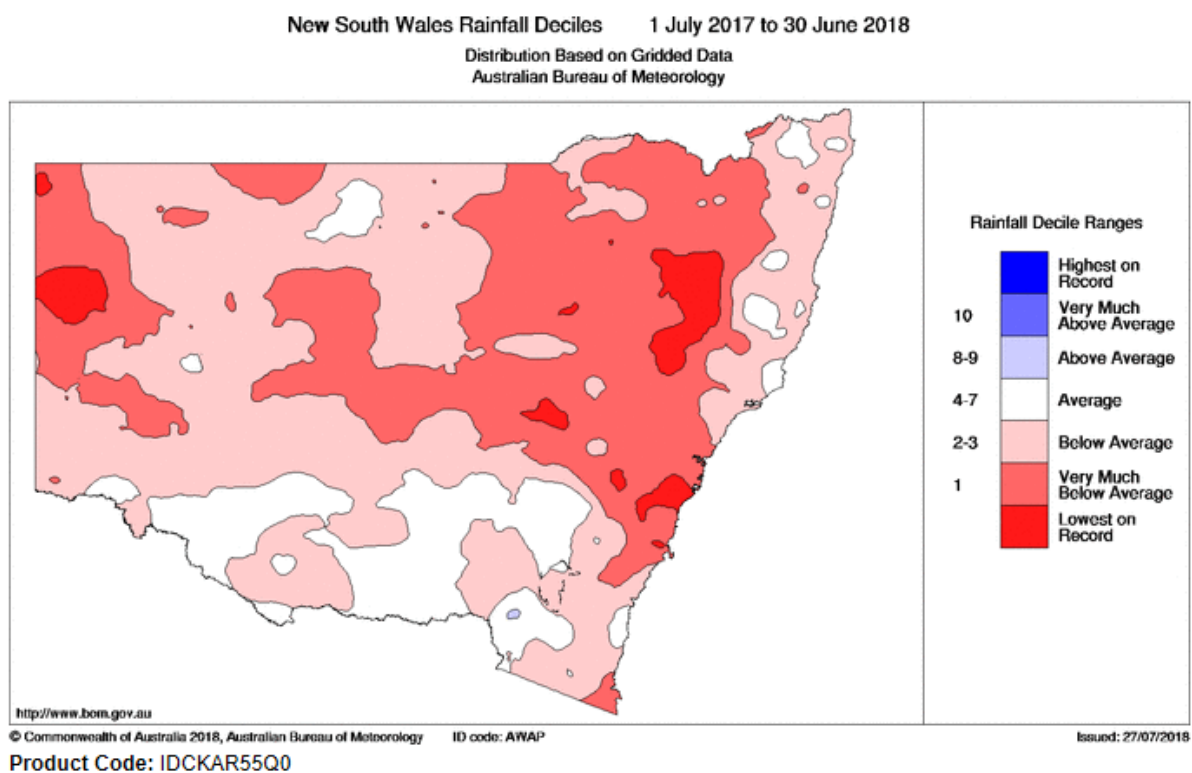


FIGURE 1 – NEW SOUTH WALES RAINFALL DECILES – 2017-2018

Mean temperatures were above average (Figure 2).

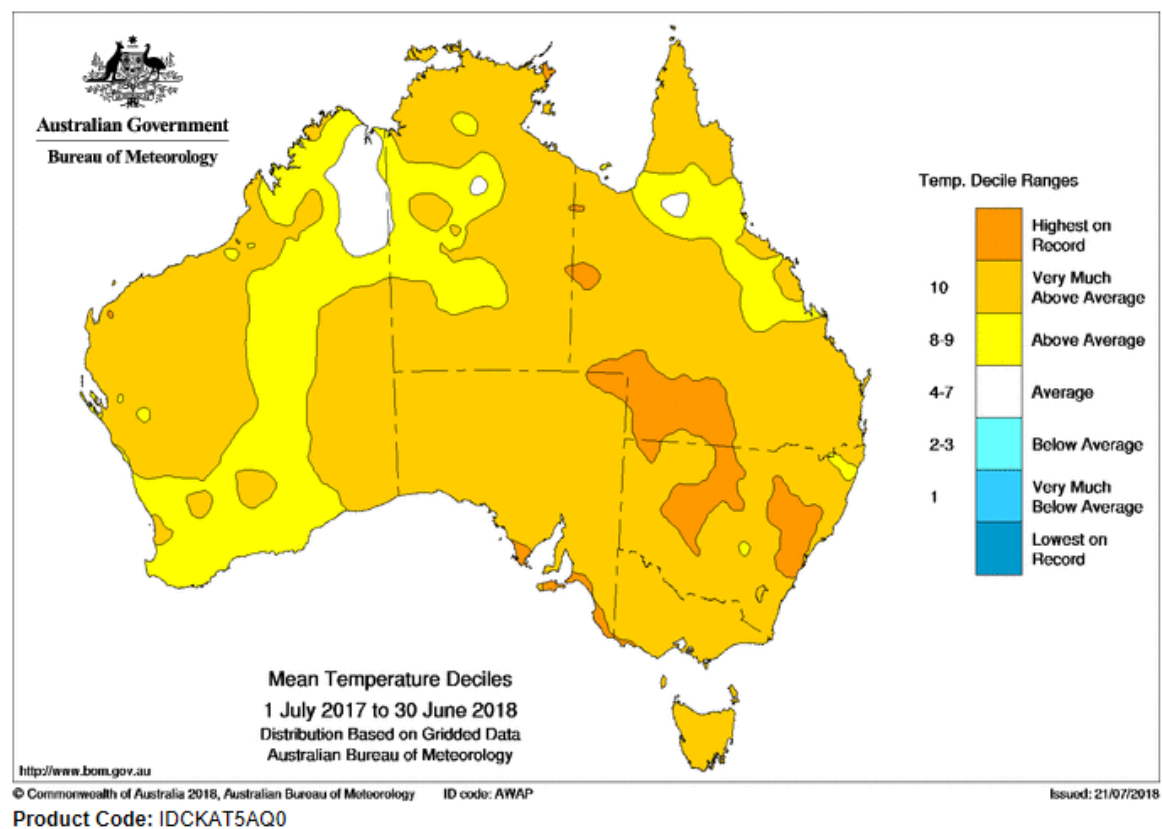


FIGURE 2 – NEW SOUTH WALES TEMPERATURE DECILES – 2017-2018

Stand Condition

Dr Vance

The Dr Vance plantation continues to perform very well, with excellent growth and tree form.



Figure 3: Dr Vance (2005 Age Class) July 2018 – the plantation continues to grow very well with excellent tree form and healthy trees

The Valley

As reported in previous years, The Valley plantation has continued to maintain good growth over most of the plantation and above average performance where stocking is adequate, particularly on lower and mid slope sites. Most of the plantation has reasonable tree form, which is gradually improving with tree age, however, in areas where there is lower stocking tree form is generally much poorer.

The area replanted in 2012 due to wildfire damage is growing well with reasonable tree stocking, Figure 6.



Figure 4: The Valley (2005 Age Class) – Upgraded access road – view to plantation



Figure 5: The Valley (2005 Age Class) – bridge being installed to provide log haulage access within the plantation



Figure 6: The Valley (2012 Age Class – Fire replant) – stocking and tree growth for the 2012 fire damage replant area is satisfactory.

Forest Health & Biosecurity

Aerial forest health surveillance was undertaken in late June 2018 (Figure 7) and followed up with ground inspections. Preliminary reporting indicates no significant forest health issues are presenting in the 2004 Softwood Project properties.

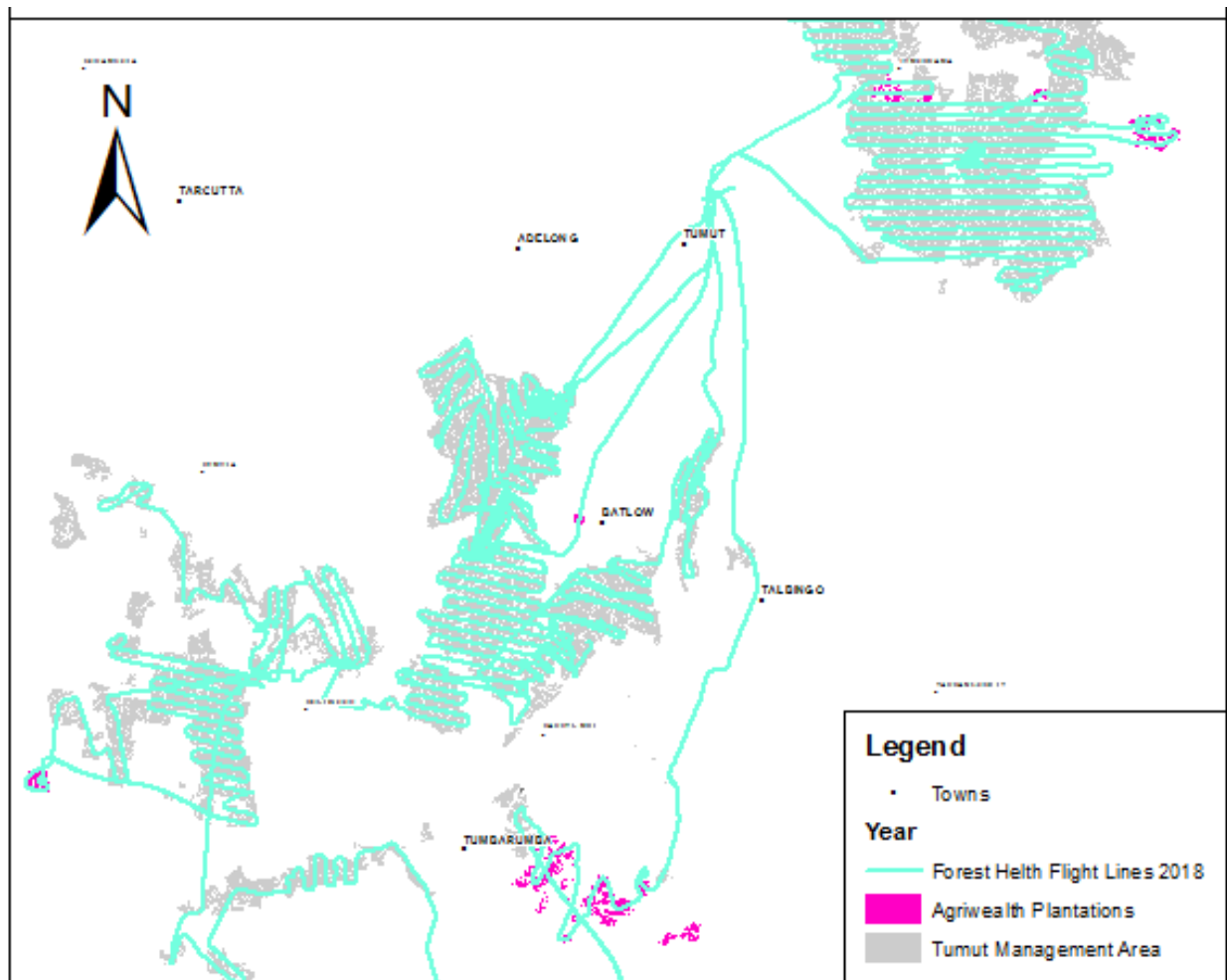


Figure 7: Forest health aerial surveillance flight paths over Tumut plantations – June 2018.

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.

Harvesting and Harvest Roothing

AgriWealth Pty Ltd has completed upgrading the road access to The Valley along the 2.5km section of East Burra Rd to gravel B-Double truck standard. This connects the plantation to Tooma Road, Figure 4. Forestry Corporation has commenced upgrading sections of the road network within the plantation that will be initially required in The Valley to facilitate log haulage for first thinning, Figure 5.

Thinning harvest operations are expected to commence during the summer of 2018/19 in both The Valley and Dr Vance plantations. Thinning will remove a significant proportion of trees with poor stem form, which promotes growth on the better trees, allowing them to grow on to produce a higher proportion of saw logs at final harvest. The reduction in tree stocking following thinning also reduces drought stress on individual trees and reduces the risk of more significant tree loss and susceptibility to pests and diseases, including sirex wood wasp and *Dothistroma*.

Other Management Issues

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 replanted 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 2018/2019

- Aerial and ground forest health surveillance
- Maintenance of tracks and access roads
- Fire risk reduction works and surveillance
- Commencement of 1st thinning operations
- Road construction to support timber haulage for 1st thinning operations

Report Prepared by



Charlie Taylor

STEWARDSHIP AND FIRE MANAGER

SNOWY REGION

Monthly Rainfall Statistics

