



**Dominic Perrottet**

Treasurer

**John Barilaro**

Deputy Premier

Minister for Regional NSW

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday, 29 August 2019

### **NSW GOVERNMENT TO ASSESS OPTIONS FOR COMMERCIAL SOFTWOOD OPERATIONS**

The NSW Government has today announced it will seek more information about the viability of a long-term lease of the State's commercial softwood plantation business, consistent with its asset recycling strategy.

Forestry Corporation's profitable softwood division consists of around 230,000 hectares of radiata pine forests primarily producing timber for use in house construction.

NSW Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said it was time to consider whether it was in the best interest of the people of NSW for the Government to continue running the business.

"A government's priority should be providing infrastructure and services for its people. Commercial operations are often better left to the private sector but we'll wait for the outcome of a scoping study before making any decisions," Mr Perrottet said.

"NSW is the only state left in Australia still running a softwood plantation of significant scale so it's appropriate we take stock as a state and explore whether this is still the best approach for us."

"Our other asset-recycling initiatives such as the long-term lease of the State's electricity assets have unlocked around \$30 billion for vital infrastructure across NSW, boosted economic growth and given us the lowest unemployment rate in the country."

Deputy Premier John Barilaro said any lease of the softwood plantations would only proceed on the basis that it posed no risk to the regional jobs involved.

"My focus throughout this process is the protection of regional jobs," Mr Barilaro said.

"I can assure Forestry Corporation workers, that as the Minister for Forestry, I am determined to grow the harvestable forestry estate across NSW, increasing timber supplies and creating more jobs and better opportunities in the sector.

"We support the decision to assess our options on the softwood business but want to reassure those people working in the plantations, they will not be left out in the cold.

“This is all about what’s best for the people in NSW and that starts with the people employed on site,” he said.

**Projects funded with the assistance of asset recycling include:**

- Regional Road Freight Corridor
- More Trains, More Services program
- Fixing Country Roads program
- Bridges for the Bush
- Lismore Hospital Redevelopment
- Dubbo Base Hospital Redevelopment
- Armidale Hospital
- WestConnex
- Sydney Metro City and Southwest

**MEDIA: Amber Muir | Treasurer | 0447 695 520**  
**Jennifer Lugsdin | Deputy Premier | 0427 930 922**