

**Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate**

**To:** Minister for the Environment and Heritage  
Minister for Planning and Land Management

Tracking No.: 22/146684

**Date:** 08/11/2022

**From:** Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service

**Subject:** Unlawful removal of trees and timber

- A/g DDG, Environment Water and Emissions Reduction 09/11/2022

**Key Points**

- The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) is investigating several instances of native trees and fallen timber being unlawfully cut and removed from leased and unleased land including nature reserves.
- In June 2022, PCS received a report from members of the public about a dead standing native tree being cut down in Callum Brae Nature Reserve. Statements and other evidence have been obtained from the witnesses and the investigation is ongoing.
- Since receiving that report, PCS has become aware of native trees being taken from other sites including Gigerline Nature Reserve, Kowen Forest and leased land at Williamsdale (see images in [Attachment A](#)).
- It is apparent that the offenders have keys that enable them to access public land via locked gates.
- In all, PCS is aware of about 30 native trees that have been cut and removed. Both live and dead standing trees along with fallen timber have been cut and taken. It is likely that some of the trees have been taken to be sold as firewood advertised for sale online and via social media. Standing dead trees are targeted as they can be used or sold immediately as firewood.
- Damaging native trees, including cutting and felling, is an offence under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.
- Detecting, preventing and identifying the offenders responsible is difficult as trees are taken from isolated and remote locations and the offending may occur at night.
- PCS has sought information from the public about these matters via social media and is sharing information with the ACT Policing Rural Patrol.
- PCS will investigate options for legislative amendment to introduce infringement notices for native timber offences along with vehicle-related offence provisions that

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attach liability to the registered owner of a vehicle used in the commission of an offence.

- You will be kept updated on this matter as further information becomes available.

**Noted / Please Discuss**

Rebecca Vassarotti MLA  ..... 10/11/2022

Minister's Office Feedback

**Noted / Please Discuss**

Mick Gentleman MLA ...../...../.....

Minister's Office Feedback



Unleased forestry land – Kowen



Callum Brae Nature Reserve

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Mick Gentleman MLA .....  ..... 10/11/2022

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This is concerning. Please keep me updated about efforts to prevent this. Also, has this matter been reported to police and is the access to keys related to the theft of PCS keys, that occurred a few years back? What other measures are needed to protect reserves?



Unleased forestry land – Kowen



Callum Brae Nature Reserve