

***Legislation (Deferral of Sunsetting—Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulation)
Certificate 2023***

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Issued by the Attorney-General in compliance with
section 15G of the *Legislation Act 2003*

INTRODUCTION

The *Legislation (Deferral of Sunsetting—Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulation) Certificate 2023* (the Certificate) is made under paragraph 51(1)(c) of the *Legislation Act 2003* (Legislation Act). It is a legislative instrument for the purposes of the Legislation Act and must be registered on the Federal Register of Legislation. The Certificate will be subjected to the disallowance provisions of the Legislation Act as the deferred sunseting day specified in the Certificate is after the first anniversary of the originally scheduled sunseting day, which means that subsection 51(4) of that Act (which provides an exemption from disallowance for deferrals of 12 months or less) does not apply.

OUTLINE

Sunseting is the automatic repeal of legislative instruments after a fixed period. The Australian Government's sunseting framework is established under Part 4 of Chapter 3 of the Legislation Act. The purpose of the sunseting framework is to ensure that legislative instruments are kept up to date and only remain in force for so long as they are needed.

Subsection 50(1) of the Legislation Act provides that a legislative instrument is automatically repealed on 1 April or 1 October immediately on or following the tenth anniversary of its registration. Under paragraph 51(1)(c) of the Legislation Act the Attorney-General can issue a certificate to defer the sunseting day of an instrument for a period of either 6, 12, 18 or 24 months.

The instrument will then be repealed on the day specified in the certificate instead of the previously scheduled sunseting day. This allows instruments to continue to be in force for a further but limited period of time when they would otherwise sunset. This removes the administrative burden of remaking instruments which would have a limited duration prior to their repeal and potential

replacement, or where circumstances prevent the making of replacement instruments prior to the sunseting day.

The Certificate defers the sunseting date of the *Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulation 2012* (the Regulation) by 24 months from 1 April 2023 to 1 April 2025.

The ability to defer sunseting dates is an integral part of the sunseting framework. It provides the necessary flexibility to ensure the standard 10 year sunseting period does not result in unintended consequences or impose an unreasonable administrative burden on Commonwealth agencies or the Parliament. In 2021-22, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry undertook a comprehensive sunseting review of the Act and Regulation to ensure the legislation remains fit-for-purpose. Legislative amendments required to implement the review's findings should be finalised and in place within 24 months after the sunseting day for the Regulation. The issuance of a deferral certificate will ensure there is no gap in the continuing operation of the Commonwealth illegal logging legislative framework. Deferral of the sunseting day will also avoid the need to remake the Regulation in its current form for the short period of time before it would need to be changed against to implement the review's findings.

PROCESS BEFORE CERTIFICATE WAS MADE

Regulatory impact analysis

Certificates of deferral of sunseting are machinery of government instruments, and are therefore not subject to the regulatory impact assessment requirements set out by the Office of Impact Analysis (OIA). The OIA reference for this standing exemption is ID19633.

Consultation before making

Before the Certificate was issued, the Attorney-General considered the general obligation to consult imposed by section 17 of the Legislation Act.

The Regulation is made under the *Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012* (the Act) and contains essential provisions for the operation of Australia's illegal logging laws. These laws were introduced to address the harmful and wide-reaching social, environmental and economic impacts of illegal logging.

As part of the Review, stakeholders were consulted on a number of proposed reforms to the legislative framework, with the aim of streamlining regulation and reducing compliance costs. Stakeholders who participated in the Review included industry representatives, timber importers, customs brokers, non-

government organisations. They indicated broad support for reforms to the legislation, including a number of recommended changes to the Regulation. Accordingly, the Regulation will likely cease to be in force in its current form within 24 months of its original sunseting day.

Certificates of deferral are machinery in nature, and enable legislative instruments that would otherwise sunset to remain in force for a further, but strictly limited, period of time. This will minimise the administrative burden on stakeholders associated with consultation on a deferral that will only have effect for a limited amount of time. Any replacement instruments will be subject to further consultation and parliamentary oversight, including oversight of whether adequate consultation occurred with persons likely to be affected by the replacement instruments. As such, given that deferral of the sunseting date of the Regulation is consistent with the policy intent of the sunseting regime and does not significantly alter existing arrangements, appropriate consultation has occurred for the purposes of section 17 of the Legislation Act.

Statutory preconditions relevant to the Certificate

If the statutory conditions in section 51 of the Legislation Act are met, an instrument's sunseting day can be deferred for 6, 12, 18 or 24 months by means of a certificate made under that section. In terms of process, the Legislation Act requires:

- (a) the responsible rule-maker to apply to the Attorney-General in writing, and
- (b) the Attorney-General to be satisfied that:
 - (i) the instrument would (apart from the operation of the sunseting provisions) be likely to cease to be in force within 24 months after its sunseting day
 - (ii) the proposed replacement instrument will not be able to be completed before the sunseting day for reasons that the rule-maker could not have foreseen and avoided
 - (iii) the dissolution of expiration of the House of Representatives or the prorogation of the Parliament renders it inappropriate to make a replacement instrument before a new government is formed, or
 - (iv) the Attorney-General has approved Part 4 of Chapter 3 of the Legislation Act (Sunsetting) not applying to that instrument, and
- (c) the Attorney-General to issue a certificate. The explanatory statement for the certificate must include a statement of reasons for the issue of the certificate.

The rule-maker for the Regulation, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister for Emergency Management, the Senator the Hon Murray Watt, provided a written application to the Attorney General seeking a certificate of deferral of sunseting for the Regulation. On the basis of the information contained in the statement of reasons below, the Attorney-General is satisfied that the Regulation would, apart from the operation of Part 4 of Chapter 3 of the Legislation Act, be likely to cease to be in force within 24 months after its sunseting day. As such, the criterion in subparagraph 51(1)(b)(i) of the Legislation Act is met.

Statement of Reasons for issuing of the Certificate

For the purposes of subsection 51(5) of the Legislation Act this section sets out the statement of reasons for issuing the Certificate.

In 2021-22, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry undertook a comprehensive sunseting review of the Act and Regulation to ensure the legislation remains fit for purpose. The Certificate defers the sunseting date of the Regulation to 1 April 2025 to enable the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to implement the findings of this comprehensive review. The deferral of the sunseting date will facilitate the implementation of the review's findings. Accordingly, the Regulation will likely cease to be in force in its current form within 24 months of its original sunseting date.

More information

Further details on the provisions of the Certificate are provided in [Attachment A](#).

The Regulation which is subject to the Certificate, and which will now sunset at a later day as specified in the Certificate, is available on the Federal Register of Legislation.

Further information may be requested from the Attorney-General's Department about the operation of the Certificate, and from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry about the Regulation to which the Certificate applies.

STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

The *Legislation (Deferral of Sunseting—Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulation) Certificate 2023* (the Certificate) is compatible with human rights and freedoms recognised or declared in the international instruments listed in section 3 of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011* (the Human Rights Act).

Overview of the Certificate

The Certificate is made under paragraph 51(1)(c) of the *Legislation Act 2003*. Under that paragraph the Attorney-General can issue a certificate to defer the sunseting day of an instrument for a period of either 6, 12, 18 or 24 months. The instrument will then be repealed on the day specified in the Certificate instead of the originally scheduled sunseting day. The instrument specified in the Certificate is the *Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulation 2012* (the Regulation). The Regulation is expected to be repealed and replaced within 24 months of its scheduled sunseting date as part of a comprehensive review into the *Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012* (the Act), which the Regulation is made under.

The Certificate allows the Regulation to continue to be in force for a further, but limited, period of time when it would otherwise sunset. This removes the administrative burden of remaking the Regulation which would have a limited duration prior to its expected repeal and replacement, or where circumstances prevent the making of a replacement instrument prior to the sunseting day.

Human Rights Implications

A certificate of deferral of sunseting extends the operation of the instrument but does not change or affect the rights engaged under the original instrument. The Regulation does not engage in any issues of human rights and freedoms recognised or declared by the international instruments in section 3 of the Human Rights Act. This is evidenced by the explanatory statement published when the Regulation was made.

Before issuing the Certificate, the Attorney-General was satisfied that the Regulation would, apart from the operation of the sunseting provisions, cease to be in force within 24 months of its sunseting date. Issuing a certificate of deferral therefore avoids the need to replace the Regulation in its current form for a short period of time before it is expected to be repealed and replaced.

Instruments that are replaced will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny and oversight through the disallowance processes unless otherwise exempt. The human rights impact of the Regulation will be assessed at the time any replacement instrument is made, including through the requirement to prepare a further Statement of Compatibility with Human Rights.

Conclusion

This Certificate is compatible with the human rights and freedoms recognised or declared in the international instruments listed in section 3 of the Human Rights Act, as it does not raise any human rights issues, and ensures that any proposal to make a replacement instrument will be subject to parliamentary oversight and scrutiny.

NOTES ON THE CERTIFICATE

Section 1 Name

This section provides that the Certificate is named the *Legislation (Deferral of Sunsetting—Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulation) Certificate 2023*. The Certificate may be cited by this name.

Section 2 Commencement

This section provides for the Certificate to commence on the day after it is registered.

Section 3 Authority

This section provides that the Certificate is made under paragraph 51(1)(c) of the *Legislation Act 2003*.

Section 4 Deferral of sunsetting

This section provides that the *Illegal Logging Regulation 2012*, for which the sunsetting day is 1 April 2023, is repealed by section 51 of the *Legislation Act 2003* on 1 April 2025.

Section 5 Repeal of the instrument

This section provides that the Certificate is repealed at the start of 2 April 2025.