

Public submission

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Dear members of the FIAP,

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard and to make a case for the immediate and permanent cessation native forest logging in NSW.

I do not write for myself, but for those too young to speak up; our children, our grandchildren and their descendants, whose future we are at dire risk of impoverishing.

“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.”

Author unknown

I urge the panel to be on the right side of history.

Since European settlement Australia has lost close to half of her native forests and has the highest rate of extinction of terrestrial mammals of any continent. Many more species are at risk of extinction, clinging to existence in degraded and fragmented home ranges. Yet we continue to allow the logging of native forests, land clearing and are struggling to address climate change, leading to increasingly intense wildfires and further habitat destruction. The trajectory is frightening, and it is time to take a stand.

Why are we allowing this to happen? The forestry industry knows full well that if the logging of native forests and associated destruction of critical habitat were in full public view, they would have close to no support. They rely heavily on *out-of-sight out-of-mind*, but fortunately scrutiny of their activities is rapidly intensifying, and our politicians would be wise take note.

The arguments that the Forestry Industry will make to the panel are entirely predictable, at best disingenuous and at worst dishonest. They will argue that native forests are a renewable resource, that they can be harvested sustainably, that their practices avoid ecological harm and that they can be trusted to police their own compliance with NSW EPA amendments to forestry rules (such as the protection of hollow-bearing trees in the habitat of endangered Greater Gliders).

Using Tallaganda State Forest as a exemplar, the Forestry Corporation of NSW states on their public-facing website that they harvest less than 1% of the total forested area in Tallaganda each year. Closer examination of their calculations quickly reveals that they include forested areas in Tallaganda National Park in the denominator of their calculations. In truth, they log closer to 2% of Tallaganda State Forest each year. Moreover, they choose not to mention critical habitat loss that occurred in Tallaganda State Forest during the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires which pushes the proportion of healthy trees logged each year in Tallaganda even higher. If one conservatively estimated that 2.5% of trees were logged per year, then the entirety of Tallaganda State Forest would be logged in one 40-year cycle. In other words, there would be no trees older than 40 years, and this does not even take into account the long history of heavy logging of the area. A forest with trees limited to those aged 40 years or under cannot provide the necessary habitat to

sustain forest ecological diversity and would condemn a large number of species to extinction. A healthy mature forest has much older trees, with many over 150 years and some over two hundred years old. It takes this long to form the hollows that provide critically important shelter for hundreds of species including the Greater Glider that was listed as endangered in 2022. There is nothing renewable, sustainable or ecological responsible about extinction. Extinction is forever.


And finally, the notion that the Forestry Corporation can police its own compliance with EPA directives is belied by their appalling record in Tallaganda, one of the last strongholds of the Greater Glider. The Forestry Corporation of NSW was trusted to undertake surveys to identify glider den trees around which logging exclusion zones would be placed. Entirely predicably, Forestry personnel “struggled” to identify den tree in areas designated for logging while expert ecologists surveying the same areas found large numbers of den tree. This is all on the public record and is unsurprising, given the overt *conflict of interest* involved, and it is even more concerning that this is tolerated by the NSW Government.

I urge the panel not to succumb to the paper-thin arguments of those in favour of continued logging of our native forests and to fervently resist the inevitable back room lobbying that is no doubt taking place.

And please keep the best interest of your children, grandchildren and their descendants at the centre of your deliberations.

With hope for a better future,

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of Ian E. Alexander.

Ian E. Alexander