

Public submission

MARY FORBES

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Independent Forestry Panel Submission Mary Forbes, [REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity to have my say on this vital issue.

I live on the mid north coast of NSW, near the area of the proposed Great Koala National Park, and I am distressed that, within that area, there are 13 active logging coupes and that logging of State Forests is four times more intense within this area than anywhere else in this state.

On a visit to **Newry State Forest**, I witnessed the clear-felling that is typical of Forestry Corporation's destructive operations, with their gargantuan machines that crush everything, causing annihilating collateral damage of flora and fauna, unacceptable soil and landscape disturbance and ruining watercourses.



This photo I took shows the devastation and also illustrates how overblown quotas and overlogging by FC have resulted in 'harvesting' smaller and smaller trees, contributing to declining productivity. Further exacerbating unsustainability, is FC's rule-breaking taking of important habitat and feed trees.

As FCNSW hardwood division runs at such a catastrophic loss, funded by taxpayers, and we can readily satisfy our timber needs from other sources, it is clearly evident this destruction must end.

The majority of the people of NSW want native forest logging to end. We cannot be expected to finance the annihilation of our precious natural heritage.

Nearby, I found this koala crossing the road, in the middle of the day, obviously disturbed and disoriented by the logging operation that was destroying his home.



This healthy male would have been peacefully plumped in a eucalypt, dreaming in his rich green world: the dancing tree branches, the thrum of a myriad life forms, a riot of birdsong. Suddenly the roar of giant machines would have rent the air and his whole world would have been mercilessly devastated. Utter desolation. No bird left to sing. What confusion and terror must have tormented him as he fled.

We have no right to treat precious, sacred Nature, with all its irreplaceable marvels, with such disrespect.

I call for an immediate moratorium on public native forest logging and an expedited permanent end.

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Your submission

1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

Native forestry is unsustainable because of its impact on the environment and our flora and fauna. For example, Logging deprives birds and animals of den and nest hollows, which can take 100 years to develop, when so many habitat trees are cut down. Protections for these trees are inadequate and it is known that operations often break the rules that do exist.

Logging dries out forests, making them more fire-prone, which is a frightening prospect, given the effects of climate change. Mature forests are more effective at carbon sequestration than the “stick forests” that are the result of FCNSW’s methods in some areas

Clearfelling, especially on steep slopes and around watercourses, facilitating erosion and destroying soil quality and biota, is evidently disastrous. Destructive forestry practices have no place in private or public operations.

Overblown quotas and overlogging by FC have resulted in ‘harvesting’ smaller and smaller trees, contributing to declining productivity. It is also immoral that unique, biodiverse forests are cut down to be turned into low-grade products, such as tomato stakes, palettes and woodchips.

As FCNSW hardwood division runs at such a catastrophic loss, funded by taxpayers, and we can readily satisfy our timber needs from other sources, it is clearly evident this destruction must end.

The majority of the people of NSW want native forest logging to end. We cannot be expected to finance the annihilation of our precious natural heritage.

2. Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values

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The harm done to native plants and animals by native forest logging is unacceptable in the midst of our current extinction crisis. Logging of native forests directly impacts 150 threatened species in NSW.

Mature trees and complex biodiversity are vital as sources of food and breeding/nesting hollows for many species of fauna. Australians love their rare and unique species and our duty to protect and preserve them is a grave and serious responsibility. From the

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Greater Glider to Stevens Banded Snake, our flora and fauna are magnificent, distinctive and cherished. It would bring shame on us were the iconic Koala to go extinct in our lifetimes.

Forests, with their unparalleled ability to sequester carbon, are our best weapon in the fight to mitigate climate change. Forests create the conditions to foster rain and contribute to climate balance. Healthy, mature forests also clean the air we all breathe.

There is a clear connection between biodiverse forests and water security. Water is filtered by rich vegetation and streams, creeks and rivers are consequently pristine in an undisturbed environment. Natural vegetation leads to better quality soil, fungi, and soil organisms. Damaged or clear-felled forest provides a breeding ground for weeds.

Native species of flora are indispensable for pollination across the whole countryside. The whole web of life must be kept in balance for the environment and communities to remain healthy. Our wellbeing is enhanced by connection with Nature and our physical and mental health gain much from the recreation afforded by forests.

Forests nurture us spiritually and we have no right to interfere with the ancient, revered spiritual and cultural connections of First Nations people to country. It breaks my heart to see the suffering of our local Gumbaynggirr people as they witness their totems and their land being trashed so insolently by destructive logging.

3. Demand for timber products, particularly as relates to NSW housing, construction, mining, transport and retail

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Essential Energy's transition to concrete power poles away from cutting down tall, mature trees, is a good example of how we would cope using substitutes, once native logging ends.

It is appalling that hardwood timbers taken from precious native forests are turned into woodchips, only 8% last year being sawn or veneer. Softwood and substitute products such as composites can be used so that hardwood harvesting is no longer necessary. 91% of our timber needs are met from other sources, so there would be little negative impact from a cessation.

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4. The future of softwood and hardwood plantations and the continuation of Private Native Forestry in helping meet timber supply needs

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As 91% of our timber needs are met from plantations and the hardwood division of FC runs at an unacceptable loss, it is clear the hardwood division has no future. Standards for public and private plantations should be rigorous to ensure sustainability, and harvested logs should be used for quality timber products. We should never destroy a tree and the myriad life forms it supports to waste it by exporting chips.

5. The role of State Forests in maximising the delivery of a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes and options for diverse management, including Aboriginal forest management models

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We Australians are proud of our unique landscapes and their creatures. Nature tourism is the economic backbone of much of the regions, in stark contrast to the tens of millions of dollars of public money thrown at native logging. For example, a study by the University of Newcastle has proven the establishment of the Great Koala National Park would be an economic boon to the mid north coast.

State Forests in their natural condition improve water and soil quality. They provide areas of healthy recreation for locals and visitors alike.

Many First Nations people have been proud to become Rangers and guides and to care for country. In our area, we have greatly benefited from indigenous bush management, including cultural burning. A just transition for timber industry workers might include positions such as guides in the bush they know, which, I imagine, should be more satisfying than ruining it.

6. Opportunities to realise carbon and biodiversity benefits and support carbon and biodiversity markets, and mitigate and adapt to climate change risks, including the greenhouse gas emission impacts of different uses of forests and assessment of climate change risks to forests

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Forests that have not been logged are more resilient to climate change and to catastrophic fires, as well as being less dry and performing a rain-generating function.

Logging native forests releases around 3.6 tonnes of carbon annually – carbon that could be stored as the best way to help us reach our emissions goals. Mature forests

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store much more carbon than growing ones, but logged forests are drier and more fire-prone. However, if logging ceases, young forests could recover and grow to become more biodiverse, form wetter ecosystems and mature over time to help fight the battle against the worst effects of climate change.

I call for an immediate moratorium on public native forestry and an expedited end to the industry.

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