

Public submission

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Submission ID: 204987

Organisation: *Aboriginal Carbon Foundation*

Location: *New South Wales*

Supporting materials uploaded: *Attached overleaf*

Submission date: 10/13/2024 4:37:58 PM

Peter Duncan AM
Chair
Independent Forestry Council

28 May 2024

Re: NSW Forestry Action Plan submission

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our views for the consideration of the Independent Forestry Council.

Aboriginal Carbon Foundation drives economic independence and community prosperity with First Nations peoples through innovative Indigenous-led restorative landscape and climate change solutions.

The best way to improve the lives of First Nations peoples globally, is to put the power back into Indigenous hands. We do this through a strengths-based, community driven cultural framework, that supports First Nations experts in land, lore and caring for Country to develop their own biodiversity and climate solutions that demonstrate environmental, social, economic and cultural core benefits.

Our ethos is grounded in First Nations' knowledge, science and technology to take care of Country for future generations.

Contemporary forestry across Australia is subject to significant challenge from climate change. We note that harvesting of native forest has been discontinued in Victoria and Western Australia. The outcome of this is likely to have a knock-on effect to the construction industry. Further, we note instances of poor regulatory supervision on logging on private land in those jurisdictions.

AbCF understands that proposed future carbon methodologies mean it likely that only harvestable forests within the native forest estate in NSW will be eligible for carbon credits through cessation of logging at the landscape level. Estimates indicate that such cessation of logging in NSW harvestable public native forests could generate upwards of \$1 billion dollars through Australian Carbon Credit Units over the 15-year crediting period. Models suggest that up to 30% of revenue can be reinvested (~\$300 million) into the forest for management practices to ensure the integrity and permanence of carbon within the project area. This will include cultural fire practice with bushfire mitigation outcomes, invasive species management and restoration work.

Aboriginal Carbon Foundation is working with Australian Climate and Biodiversity Foundation to develop a business case to transition from forestry/harvesting to Indigenous-led land management practices, considering revenues from carbon sequestration, biodiversity improvement and wood products. This work has begun with Bega Local Aboriginal Land Council based in Eden Regional Forest Agreement area.

In addition, we plan to model social and cultural benefits to integrate into proposals for the consideration of all levels of government. This business case for transitioning to Indigenous-led land management practices will also consider fire, feral animals, failed regeneration, weed management and habitat reconstruction.

Western land management paradigms do not value cultural fire practice as a key part of forestry management. The missing piece is how Indigenous groups feed into such management practices, and what such fire regimes may look like and cost. Guidelines are needed to bring Indigenous thinking into projects, carving out space for Indigenous leadership into land management practices at a local level.

The last 200 years has seen a colonial approach to land management that follows a Western ideology that fire is bad and should be excluded from the landscape. This is not consistent with traditional Indigenous practice that has used fire for over 65,000 years as a constant tool in the landscape to ensure balance in sensitive ecosystems at a landscape level. This is particularly pertinent to Victoria and WA that have ceased native logging with an unclear transition strategy. Aboriginal Carbon Foundation seeks to chart a course of transition from native logging to Indigenous-led landscape management in NSW that may be applicable elsewhere.

We welcome the opportunity to raise these matters and look forward to sharing the outcome of our work when appropriate.

Kind regards



Rowan Foley
CEO
Aboriginal Carbon Foundation

