

ANASTASIA GUISE

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Topic 1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

I am a trained ecologist, bushfire researcher and published author. I have studied forests in Northern NSW for almost 30 years. It is clear that current forestry operations in NSW are not sustainable and operations have been beset by declining sustainability for over 50 years. Operations have become more mechanised and destructive while yielding less timber. Complex, biologically diverse habitats, representing whole ecosystems crucial to the survival of globally unique flora and fauna, have been reduced to open canopy even-aged stands of saplings vulnerable to catastrophic fire, weed incursion, climate change impacts, and pests and diseases (such as Bell-Miner associated die-back and the fungal pathogen phytophthora). Over the last 30 years, I have studied successive operations in State Forests including Tamban SF, Mistake SF, Thumb Creek SF, Collombatti SF, Shea's Knob SF, Clouds Creek SF, Newry SF, Gladstone SF, Wild Cattle Creek SF, Bagawa SF, Braemar SF, Doubleduke SF, Myrtle SF, Bungawalbin SF, Richmond Rage SF, and others, recording a marked and measurable reduction in tree quality, size, and diversity, and marked reduction in fauna occupancy, particularly by large species such as large arboreal gliders and large forest owls.

Scores of State Forests had been so poorly managed that by ~2000 FCNSW re-mapped previously protected areas of High Conservation Value Old Growth forest, and reduced previously protected stream buffers in order to gain access to large, old hollow-bearing trees of enormous ecological value for felling.

My analysis of operations 2018-2024 estimates between 64-89% of felled timber in any FCNSW logging operation is left on the forest floor as a fire hazard, smashed and churned up by the enormous harvesting machines, with just 36-11% of timber actually harvested. Of this 36-11% of felled forest, more than 90% is chipped or used to make low-value products such as tomato stakes or pizza boxes (Lindenmayer, 2024). I have recorded hundreds of young to medium aged trees felled and crushed without being harvested in operations which consistently are neither sustainable nor selective. In Doubleduke State Forest, 2023, hundreds of "accidentally felled trees" were recorded on EPA Map Viewer, crushed under harvesters and bulldozers. Operations are incompetent and negligent.

Additionally, native forest logging in NSW is economically unsustainable, costing the NSW taxpayer a loss of \$20 million in 2020-21 and \$9 million in 2021-22 (Lindenmayer, 2024).

Native forest logging in NSW is not sustainable. It must end now.

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

The environmental and cultural values of Australia's native forests are immense. Australia's native forests represent a globally unique collection of flora and fauna which have co-evolved for millions of years, including species with ancient Gondwanan lineage. These ecosystems are vital repositories of flora and fauna found nowhere else in the world, including the world's most hollow-dependant fauna. Australia's First Nations peoples have a complex and enduring relationship with Australia's forests, as custodians, kin, and managers. Aboriginal fire has shaped

forests, leaving a legacy on the landscape today so indelible, it is meaningless to speak of People separate to Country. Intact native forests act as vital carbon sinks, crucial in drawing down excess carbon in the atmosphere and storing it as wood and soil. Retention of all forested ecosystems is essential if we are to avoid catastrophic climate impacts. Forests retain soil, create rain, and over time, as they grow old, resist fire. The highest values of forests are ecological. These values uphold human life not as an economic product but as a key component of biological life support systems. Forests can no longer be considered an economic commodity, no more than we would cut and sell our grandmothers or our children.

The value of our forests extends outside of our lifetime, back to our very first terrestrial ancestors, all of the ancestors that came before us, and all of our descendants who will follow.

Not one more tree should fall. Native forest logging in NSW must end now.

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

For 240 years, Australia has been used as a mine, quarry and resource base by the coloniser, with no thought to sustainability or ecological integrity. Millions of hectares of forests were ringbarked and burnt, millions of cubic feet of timber was lost at sea in shipwrecks and in floods. We have squandered a resource which took thousands of years to grow in just a few short years.

Demands cited by FCNSW are used to falsely prop up the industry. There are alternatives available for everything we once used timber for. Importantly, very little hardwood timber from NSW Native forests is used domestically in Australia. As mentioned, the majority (more than 90%) is woodchipped or used for very low end products. Hardwood and softwood plantations supply most of our domestic needs for housing, construction, mining transport and retail already. These can be expanded on mixed or marginal land, revitalising rural communities and leaving native forests alone.

Native forest logging in NSW must end now.

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

As mentioned, hardwood and softwood plantations already supply the majority (91%) of timber needs in NSW. The sensitive and well-planned expansion of hardwood and softwood plantations should be pursued efficiently to complete a complete transition out of native forest logging in NSW. Logging native forests has attempted to reduce highly biodiverse, complex native ecosystems into plantation-like forests, at enormous cost to the environment and taxpayer. An ethical, efficient and economically viable model of plantations is the only way forward.

Logging native forests in NSW must end now.

Topic 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

NSW State Forests can deliver a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes. Logging should not be one of the modes of delivery. Rapid transferral to the conservation estate should be pursued, with a range of First Nations ownership and management arrangements brokered.

Deceptive "blackwashing" or "logging by another name" such as the "Healthy Forests Foundation" model in Victoria should be avoided, being deceptive to the public, environmentally damaging, and an insult to the struggle for First Nations' recognition as unceded sovereign custodians of Country.

Where open grassy ecosystems exist, First Nations cultural burning techniques can be employed to maintain environmental and cultural values, and reduce wildfire risk.

Topic 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

Ending native forest logging in NSW is the key strategy to meeting our emissions reductions targets. Professor Brendan Mackey, Griffith University: "Carbon emissions need to be reduced by about 15.3 megatons a year for the next 9 years if the government's target is to be met. This is about the same as the annual net carbon emissions generated by logging our native forests."

<https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/stopping-native-forest-logging-key-to-getting-to-net-zero>

NSW Native forest logging must end now