

Public submission

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Dear Forestry Industry Action Panel,

I am writing in regards to your inquiry about forestry operations in NSW.

My name is Andrew Bell, and as a senior citizen of 73 years I have travelled widely in NSW and loved the way the country is apportioned between human endeavour and that of our fellow creatures and plants. It has always been a delight to me to encounter the wildness that Nature reveals in her myriad forms, colours and behaviours, and to humbly take my place as another of her creations.

I can't help feeling sorrow at the way we are allowing our ambitions to expand without thought to the natural limitations of our environment, as though we would prefer to live in a world totally of our own manufacture, without the presence of flourishing life of all kinds around us.

One of the greatest wellsprings of natural life in our environment is our forests. They spawn and nurture thousands of species, living in a delicate balance over timeless eons and generations. For us they provide a breathing space, literally, and a window into the complex and beautiful cycle of life and natural evolution.

I hope the panel will recommend an end to native forest logging, for many reasons:

1. We are driving extinctions at a faster rate than almost any other country in the world. These precious and beautiful species will be lost to all future generations, while we create a world in which nature is only seen in zoos and carefully controlled garden spaces. I do not wish to try and imagine my grandchildren missing out on the joy of contact with nature - this is a kind of spiritual suicide in my view.
2. Climate change is the number one threat to our future, and forests do more to slow it than almost any other initiative we could take. Conversely, removing forests pumps vast amounts of extra carbon into the atmosphere, especially if the country is converted into agricultural land, or even worse, industrial.
3. To add to the pain of losing our forests, we discover that we are actually paying for it - millions of dollars tax are spent to keep loss-making industries alive. We are heavily subsidising the continuing jobs of a few people in an occupation that cannot continue long-term (because there will be no forests left to log) instead of spending the money creating and staffing new sustainable industries that have a future.
4. We need our elected government to manage NSW's forests for the benefit of the community, not for a handful of short-term profiteers.
5. I do not want to be part of the generation that shied away from its duty to the future of the natural world. As custodians of the present, we must expand our horizons to consider the reality of our small world and its finite resources. If we allow our forests to be lost, they will never come back.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I look forward to hearing about the outcomes of the review.

Sincerely,

Andrew Bell