

Public submission

ANNA JOHNSTONE

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To the Panel,

I am grateful for the opportunity to make a submission to this process. As someone who has lived for 40 years on the doorstep of the Tallaganda State Forest, which is currently being seriously impacted by logging, and as a parent of two young children, I am deeply concerned about how we, as a community, move forward.

In particular, I worry that the current balance between economic development and environmental conservation is skewed too heavily toward unsustainable practices. While I understand the importance of the forestry industry to the economy and timber supply, it is essential that we ensure these operations are sustainable and do not degrade the health of our forests for future generations.

Sustainability must be at the forefront of our thinking, particularly as Australia's climate warms. With less than 17% of Australia's land area covered in native forest, we have so little left to protect.

Close to where I live, Tallaganda is a unique environment, stretching 60 km along the crest of the Great Dividing Range and reaching elevations over 1,400 metres. This high-altitude old-growth forest is a critical stronghold for the endangered greater glider, a species whose population has plummeted over the last 20 years. Logging in these areas is particularly damaging, as it destroys the habitat that these species rely on for survival.

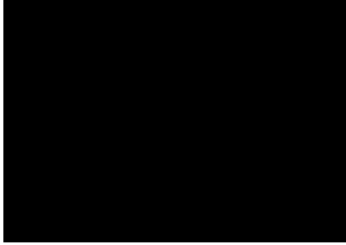
While current forestry practices in NSW are classified as "selective harvesting," what I've witnessed is far more destructive than the term implies. In one logging compartment, 7,500 cubic metres of timber were approved for removal, with significant portions categorised for sawlogs, pulp, and firewood.

The environmental damage extends beyond the loss of individual trees. Logging leaves significant biomass on the forest floor, contributing to soil degradation and increasing fire risk. This mismanagement of ecosystems undermines the forest's ability to recover and continue providing critical functions like water filtration, habitat for diverse species, and carbon sequestration. It's vital that we recognise the role forests play in mitigating climate change, particularly as Australia faces more extreme weather events.

While I acknowledge the importance of timber and the jobs the industry supports, the financial model for logging in areas like Tallaganda is not sustainable. Taxpayers are subsidising an industry that, in the long run, is causing more harm than good, both financially and environmentally. Instead, we need to invest in more sustainable options, such as plantation forestry, which can meet timber demands without destroying habitats.

As a concerned citizen, a mother, and a lifelong resident of the local area, I implore you to make the right decision to protect the future of our native forests. I want my children to have hope for a cooler future, and I want to see us, as a society, start to value what is most important to us but is at such acute risk.

Sincerely,



Anna Johnstone