

ANNETTE GLEESON

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

I'm a resident of rural New South Wales living near the Bulga and Kiwarra Forests. I regularly walk in these forests and experience firsthand the ecological benefits of keeping the forests intact. Native forest logging is now occurring in areas high in conservation & biodiversity e.g. Bulga State Forest, where most remnant populations of threatened species still survive (especially after the 2019-2020 fires). These animals and birds are territorial, its spring time and they have relatively short life spans. If they survive the habitat destruction, displacement leads to increased competition, stress, fatalities and local extinctions adding to the overall cumulative extinction of species. These high biodiverse remnant areas are increasingly rare.

rare

- The complexity of the biodiversity cannot be regenerated by plantation style plantings and we do not have a full understanding of the complexity that is lost.
- There is evidence that logged forests are more vulnerable to intense bushfires (Lindenmeyer, D.B., Yebra, M. Cary, G. 2023) 'Logging elevated the probability of high-severity fire in the 2019-2020 Australian forest fires'. Nature Ecology & Evolution, 6:533-535).
- Native Forestry logging is not sustainable because it can only operate through major taxpayer subsidies: According to the Nature Conservation Council NSW Forestry Corporation received \$246.9 million worth of grants since the 2019/20 financial year, while the hardwood division (which is responsible for native forest logging) was granted an additional \$9,787,851.1 in 2020-21 for bushfire recovery projects from the Federal Government and another \$10 million from the State Government for flood relief in 2022. However it still made a loss of \$28.2 million over the same period. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, (March 15 2022) 'The state-owned Forestry Corporation suffered a \$20 million loss last year, with NSW taxpayers forced to pay \$441 per hectare to log critical native forests. The net cost of destroying more than 13,500 hectares of red gum, ironbark and cypress trees - largely for woodchip exports and firewood - was \$6 million, while one-off recovery costs following the Black Summer bushfires soared to \$14 million.'
- Overall Nature Conservation Council states that FCNSW received \$246.9 million worth of grants from the 2019/20 financial year to the, while the hardwood division (which is responsible for native forest logging) made a loss of \$28.2 million over the same period.
- From Frontiers Economics (30 May 2023) 'Forestry Corporation of NSW's (FCNSW's) native forest logging business appears to offer poor financial returns to NSW taxpayers, with some parts of the hardwood business unlikely to be covering costs. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART) has also reported on the loss-making activities of FCNSW's hardwood division. There is also clear evidence that that value of the native forest would be higher as a standing resource.'
- Again according to Frontiers Economics (30 May 2023) 'Direct employment associated with FCNSW's hardwood business is in the order of 1,070 across the State , including those employed by FCNSW, harvest/haulage contractors and mills.'

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

Australia's rich biodiversity is a heritage that belongs to all of us and is valued across the world as evidenced by the millions of dollars donated after the Black Summer fires, the world cares. The rising community outrage & protests with otherwise law-abiding people putting their lives on the line and risking criminal convictions is evidence of this. The current Global Nature Positive Summit in Sydney, more evidence of why nature counts.

- Access to undamaged old growth native forests rich in flora and fauna is psychologically healing
- Logging destroys & degrades, causes ecological collapse with subsequent grief and despair to whole communities
- Native forests are critical for threatened species, koala, greater glider, yellow bellied glider, squirrel glider, brush-tailed phascogale etc
- They also have great significance for Indigenous people
- Interesting point, defacing heritage buildings is criminal vandalism, destroying native forests with all of the knock-on effects is not only legal but protesters are the criminals

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

90% of sawn timbers come from plantations (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forest, 2023, Australia's State of the Forest Report, Canberra, Australia).

- Native forest logging primarily goes into low value, high volume products such as woodchips, paper pulp, (tomato stakes quote from lead forestry hand, Bulga State Forest)
- NZ (20 years ago) & SA have both transitioned away from logging native forests and instead focussed on plantations (but not at the expense of destroying native forests for plantations)

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

Like NZ & SA the future of forest & the timber industry is plantations, more profitable and employs more people, more positive in terms of carbon capture, fast growing

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

Native forests have critical value for threatened and soon to be threatened native species - habitat destruction which is industrial level logging is the major driver of local extinctions. In 2004 16 532 plants & 3 817 animal species had been identified that are forest-dependant with more species expected to be identified over time due to increasing comprehensive research and reporting (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry Australian Government 2004).

- Scientific evidence also is that logging or 'thinning' or 'forest gardening' which degrades flora and fauna richness may favour some species but seriously disadvantages others that require multi-storey diverse vegetation to survive (G.J. Murray C. Everett, & D.B Lindenmeyer 6 Sept 2024, 'Logging by another name -forest gardening, perils and irritations). Also opens up forests to invasive weed infestations, think lantana, bridal creeper, invasive grass weeds
- From Frontier Economics Report of (The Time to End Native Forest Logging in NSW is Now, 30 May 2023) Direct employment associated with FCNSW's hardwood business is in the order of 1,070 across the State, including those employed by FCNSW, harvest/haulage contractors and mills. particularly in management of protected forest areas, recreation and tourism, plantation-based forestry work, fire and invasive species management and the management of carbon and biodiversity credits. Removing native forest logging and focussing on plantation timbers is not

going to have that much of an economic impact especially given that native forest logging continues to run at an economic loss and needs government subsidies to continue

- Plantation Forests offer more employment as they need to be well managed including weed & feral species control, fire risk management and the management of carbon and biodiversity credits and also offer recreational value to communities and tourists.
- Nature tourism is identified as the no 1 reasons why people visit Australia & is currently worth 20 billion a year to NSW according to National Parks Association of NSW. The establishment (as opposed to the destruction) of the Great Koala National Park promises to bring even more economic growth across all five Local Government Areas in term of tourist based businesses (accommodation, services, nature based businesses) and employment of rangers and regeneration employment.

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

Major challenge of our time is climate change , native forest logging is a direct contradiction to NSW & Australia generally meeting emissions reduction targets;

- Native forest logging generates large amounts of emissions as evident when native forest logging decreased in Tasmania major carbon credits were achieved.
- Healthy diverse forests that include complex flora including old growth trees offer the best sanctuary for wildlife as proved in the Black Summer fires and are the best storages of carbon.
- Complex healthy forests also retain moisture better with heavily canopy shaded areas less vulnerable to weed species that aggravate bushfire risk (HotSpots Fire Project, May 2017, Nature Conservation Council & NSW RFS).
- By comparison the planting and harvesting of fast growing plantation timbers on existing cleared and/or degraded land is carbon positive
- Because plantation forests are relatively fast growing they also offer better more efficient carbon capture;