

ARRON GERRY

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

I work in the forest industry. I believe the industry is managed sustainably as that provides the best outcome for the community and the industry. No forests means no industry. The industry is regulated to provide sustainability.

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

The industry is part of the local community and culture. So is the natural environment and forest for its beauty.

We have koalas in our area. There is always a strong emphasis on koala habitat and numbers. Recent research showing that koalas will inhabit harvested areas (Law BS, Gonsalves L, Brassil T, Kerr I (2024) Broad-scale acoustic monitoring of koala populations suggests metapopulation stability, but varying bellow rate, in the face of major disturbances and climate extremes. Ecology and Evolution <https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.11351>) has not been as widely publicised as it should have been.

The way koalas have been used politically to win votes based on the creation of the koala park is not right. Koala figures used to list them as endangered were from expert guesses (Adams & Hosking, C., et al. Use of expert knowledge to elicit population trends for the koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*). Diversity and Distributions 22.3 (2016): 249-262.). Numbers from the state government actually looking for koalas and counting them shows much greater hope for the species. Great news! (CSIRO. (2024). 2024 update of National Koala Population estimates. CSIRO). The research the NSW government has committed to has not finished and the numbers are not settled yet (NSW Government. (n.d.). Building Our Knowledge. Retrieved from NSW Department of Environment & Heritage <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/programs-legislation-and-framework/nsw-koala-strategy>). Creating a park and closing the forest for production before the numbers are in is very cart before the horse.

When more forests are added to the reserve system that does not increase biodiversity protection. The biggest threat to our biodiversity is fire (Phillips, S., Wallis, K., & Lane, A. (2021). Quantifying the impacts of bushfire on populations of wild koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*): Insights from the 2019/20 fire season. Ecological Management & Restoration, 22(1), 80-88).

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

Timber is the best material for carbon responsible building. Managing forests is the best for fire, and therefore biodiversity, protection.

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

Soft wood plantations are well established and delivering commodity products such as framing. Hardwood plantations need funding and time to contribute to the sawn timber market. PNF supports land owners financially and managing the forest for timber helps when needing to manage the forest for fire. Native forest harvesting is usually a side business providing finances in hard times such as drought. Some increase in production from existing plantations could be possible with technologies for increasing sawn recovery. But favorable policy will be needed to maintain or increase plantation area and private forest management.

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

Forests in national parks are managed for environmental outcomes excluding harvesting. State forests are managed for environmental outcomes but include other uses like harvesting. Forests that are harvested and regrown still have environmental values. Animals are not excluded from regenerating forests (Law BS, Gonsalves L, Brassil T, Kerr I (2024) Broad-scale acoustic monitoring of koala populations suggests metapopulation stability, but varying bellow rate, in the face of major disturbances and climate extremes. Ecology and Evolution <https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.11351>)

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

Continued harvesting forests on a rotation of greater than 20 years at a rate of less than a percent of the total state owned forest annually will not inhibit any plans for climate mitigation uses.