

Public submission

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Submission to the Independent Forestry Panel

Dear Independent Forestry Panel Secretariat

Please accept my submission into the sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW.

My name is Bruce Harris. I live in Sydney. I have a life-long appreciation for the Australian natural environment and all its unique flora and fauna. It has been a great sadness of my life to watch as our natural environment has been degraded year after year, decade after decade by the impact of human activity.

Australia is now a world leader in habitat destruction and animal extinctions. The situation in NSW is particularly bad. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature-Australia, NSW is Australia's worst clearer of trees, with the state ranking at the bottom of the WWF-Australia trees scorecard for 2023. (<https://wwf.org.au/news/2023/wwf-launches-australias-first-national-trees-scorecard-nsw-and-qld-rate-very/>)

The logging of native forests has been a major factor in the habitat destruction and animal extinctions identified by the World Wide Fund. The Forestry Corporation of NSW has been repeatedly called out for its poor management of the state's native forests.

Forestry Corporation routinely fails to conduct adequate surveys of native animals before commencing logging operations in native forests. In August 2023 logging operations were halted in the Tallaganda State Forest after a Greater Glider was found dead 50 metres from a recently logged section. According to media reports, Forestry Corporation had failed to conduct an adequate survey of the area before logging, claiming to have only identified one Glider den tree, when only days before a conservationist working for Wilderness Australia found three den trees close to the one mapped by Forestry Corporation. (<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/logging-suspended-after-an-endangered-greater-glider-found-dead-20230830-p5e0ss.html>)

In July this year the Land and Environment Court fined Forestry Corporation \$360,000 for offences related to the logging of eucalyptus trees in the Yambulla state forest near Eden. The court's judgement found that Forestry Corporation "has a significant history of unlawfully carrying out forestry operations". (<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/article/2024/jul/31/forestry-corporation-of-nsw-has-a-pattern-of-illegally-damaging-the-environment-scathing-judgment-finds>)

It is because of failures like these that I strongly support an end to native forest logging. NSW's timber future needs to be based on sustainable plantations.

Logging in native forests is not environmentally sustainable. It removes the older trees, removing hollows and other habitat for forest wildlife, such as the Koala and the Great Glider. Continued logging will likely contribute greatly to the extinction of forest dependent wildlife.

Logging in native forests is not economically sustainable. Forestry Corporation's native forest logging operations run at a loss, costing the taxpayer millions while leading to permanent damage to our forests.

Logging in native forests contributes to climate change. We need healthy forests for holding carbon, cleaning our water, providing habitat, improving fire management and providing recreation. Logging native forests releases carbon and damages biodiversity.

Opportunities to realise carbon and biodiversity benefits and support carbon and biodiversity markets would be best achieved by ceasing the unsustainable logging of native forests and supporting sustainable timber plantations.

NSW should follow Victoria and Western Australia and commit to ending logging in native forests. Even Queensland has committed to stopping logging south of Noosa. Please do not let NSW become a laggard when it comes to logging in native forests.

Regards

Bruce Harris

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