

Public submission

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Submission ID: 205172

Organisation: *N/A*

Location: *New South Wales*

Supporting materials uploaded: *Attached overleaf*

Submission date: 10/13/2024 8:50:53 PM

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Your submission

1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

Forestry NSW is no longer sustainable, either economically or environmentally. While these lands were set aside for forestry decades ago, the situation in 2024 requires different management. Native forests now hold increasing importance as land clearing continues. The native forestry division of FCNSW is operating at a loss, not as a viable business. It is subsidised by the public, and still reports a loss. In the face of overwhelming opposition by the public to the logging of native forests, I urge the Independent Forestry Panel to recommend the cessation of native forestry operations in NSW, the transition to plantation timber, and the fair support of timber workers as required.

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

Native forests are much loved by community especially those who live nearby. At the moment, operations are underway in Kiwarrak State Forest and I request that these operations cease immediately while this panel reviews submissions. Kiwarrak SF is less than 1km from my home. I access the forest for bike riding, for walking and koala and bird spotting. For the last 5 years I have been monitoring the critically endangered Pale Yellow Doubletail orchid (*Diuris Flavescens*) as part of citizen science. I also contribute to the population count of our local koalas. This means I have come to know and love this forest, and am devastated that forestry operations were allowed to proceed. Kiwarrak is home to a large, intergenerational koala population which was reduced by 50-80% by the 2019 fires. The forest was ravaged by these high intensity fires, and this is in part due to the repeated (every 20 years) logging of the forest, which reduces canopy cover, dries out soils and vegetation, promotes overabundant weed growth and destroys the natural function of the forest as an ecosystem (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).

It is vital that these forests are now seen not as a commodity or resource, but as an asset for community and the environment.

I cannot speak for the Aboriginal culture generally, however I can tell this story. I have worked with members of the Biripi community who also feel powerless to stop the current FCNSW operations. One local elder has Koala as his skin name. He feels incredible pain at the knowledge that he cannot protect the koala habitat on his country.

I give these examples as my personal experience, however I recognise that there are many groups in NSW who are also opposed to the logging of the native forests near their homes along eastern NSW, and many who have engaged politically to stop the logging of their local forests. Few have been successful at halting operations, other than through the discovery of breaches which then results in FCNSW paying fines, also from the public purse which is even more insulting. And it is particularly difficult to accept FCNSW processes, when there is no *independent* observer to monitor compliance. Breaches have typically been discovered by members of the

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public, who may sometimes have to access the forest when it is closed for operations, and then request EPA to investigate. This process shows complete lack of transparency, and has further reduced FCNSW's credibility.

Furthermore, the NSW government's promise to create the Great Koala National Park is equally lacking in credibility. To propose the creation of this park, then allow the rapid harvesting from these exact areas shows utter insincerity.

In summary, the environmental and cultural values (including protection of threatened species) which result from protection of native forests far outweigh any gains from their commercial use.

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

Timber will always have a place in construction and retail however this submission proposes that native hardwood harvesting is no longer viable for economic, cultural and environmental reasons. I urge the transition to plantation timber. Combined with increasing research that offers economical timber alternatives for many common uses, demand will continue to decrease and native forestry will be even more unviable.

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

Faster growing plantations have been shown to be profitable and assist with greater employment. Further to this, if they are harvested in a way similar to "strip grazing" ie felling sequential sections of the plantation and leaving significant portions for a future harvest, it would minimise the damage to soils, and habitat could be sought by wildlife in close areas, as opposed to wildlife needing to seek refuge further afield.

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

State Forests are a precious resource for community. Given that they are not "locked away" like National Parks, they allow the community to ride bikes, walk dogs and ride horses. State Forests could continue to operate in this way, but gain revenue from other ways. It must be taken into consideration that intact forests attract community use, and we gain from tourism and health benefits in ways which are difficult to measure. Aboriginal organisations could be offered the chance to engage with management for cultural (low intensity) burns, native food harvesting and cultural activities. Bike and walking tracks would be suitable for different state forests based on their topography, location and ecosystems, and would attract tourism. Native species breeding

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grounds could be established (for example koala, greater gliders) with education opportunities. Flora reserves and trails would bring more protection to the forests and allow opportunities for tourism. State forests could be accessed by universities for research, without the damage that is done by timber harvesting. Many of these models could be supported by groups such as indigenous employment, TAFE, Landcare and the Department of Education. A diverse range of opportunities exists for each state forest depending on its location and particular assets.

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

It is increasingly recognised that native forests hold tremendous potential to support carbon capture and have a significant role to play in mitigating climate change, water retention and capture. It could be possible to use the protection of state forests within the carbon market (for example, calculating the benefits of not logging) in the short term. It is difficult to measure the benefits of biodiversity as today, we seem to measure in loss rather than gains. We record local extinctions and we record critically low levels of different species. We investigate the reasons for these biodiversity threats and the result is overwhelmingly the same – habitat protection is the most vital key. Native species can exist quite independently of us if they have a safe place to live.

If we could measure the economic benefits of intact state forests, the panel would undoubtedly recommend an immediate end to native forestry in NSW.

I implore this panel to immediately suspend the current operations of Forestry Corporation of NSW, in particular the logging of KIWARRAK STATE FOREST and BULGA STATE FOREST on the mid north coast. Please consider a moratorium on current operations until these submissions have been reviewed.

After filling in this submission template, please upload the completed submission to our online submission portal, linked [here](#). When you upload your submission successfully, you will receive a confirmation email from us. If you don't receive a confirmation email, please check your Junk Email folder. If you have further issues, please email forestryiap@ipcn.nsw.gov.au for assistance.