

Public submission

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Thank you for allowing me to enter a submission.

I strongly support an immediate end to native forest logging. We can get all timber products we need from sustainable plantations rather than put undue pressure on threatened species habitat in an ecologically and economically unsustainable industry.

I also support an immediate moratorium on all logging activities within all areas currently considered to form part of the Great Koala National Park.

The true value of our native forests does not come from wood production, but from their critical role in carbon storage, the water cycle, clean air, providing critical habitat, reducing fire risk, recreation, mental and physical wellbeing and spiritual connection.

I trust you will make the long overdue decision to join WA, Victoria and New Zealand in ending native forest logging and preserving our forests as vital habitat for generations to come.

Best regards,

Daniela Osiander

Your submission

1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

Sustainability is generally defined as ‘fulfilling the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations, while ensuring a balance between economic growth, environmental care and social well-being’ ([Santander Open Academy](#)).

- a) Economically: Native forest logging in NSW has not been economically viable for many years. Instead, taxpayers in NSW subsidise the -at very least -intermediate destruction of public native forest habitats with millions of dollars every year. Over the last two decades, native forest logging has only been able to operate with the injection of very considerable public funds. Add to that additional significant legal costs and fines for frequent transgressions by state-owned Forestry Corporation. The Land and Environment Court recently found that the agency had “a pattern of environmental offending, has not provided any compelling evidence of measures taken by it to prevent its reoffending, and does not accept the true extent of harm that it has caused by its offending” ([The Guardian](#))

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[Australia](#)). This means apart from being financially unviable, Forestry Corporation has long lost its social licence and trust with the people of NSW.

Economic sustainability is of course also vital for the people employed in the industry. I do not want to downplay the significance that a decision to end native forest logging would have on some local contractors and regional communities. Alas, it is feasible to develop transition planning for this. Firstly, there is only a relatively small and declining number of people employed in native forest logging. According to the [ABS](#), employment in forestry and logging in **all of Australia** decreased from approximately 8,700 persons in 1988 to 6,500 people in 2019. Breaking this down for NSW and considering that a large number of these would in fact be working in plantation industry, the actual number of affected workers from ending native forest logging is in fact quite small. And the current rate of effectively subsidising these jobs with public money is again neither sustainable nor sensible.

A final question here is timber supply. But the fact that well above 90% of the timber from native forests ends up as low value products like tomato stakes and wood chips and that forestry from plantations actually runs at a profit means there is insufficient benefit to justify native forest logging.

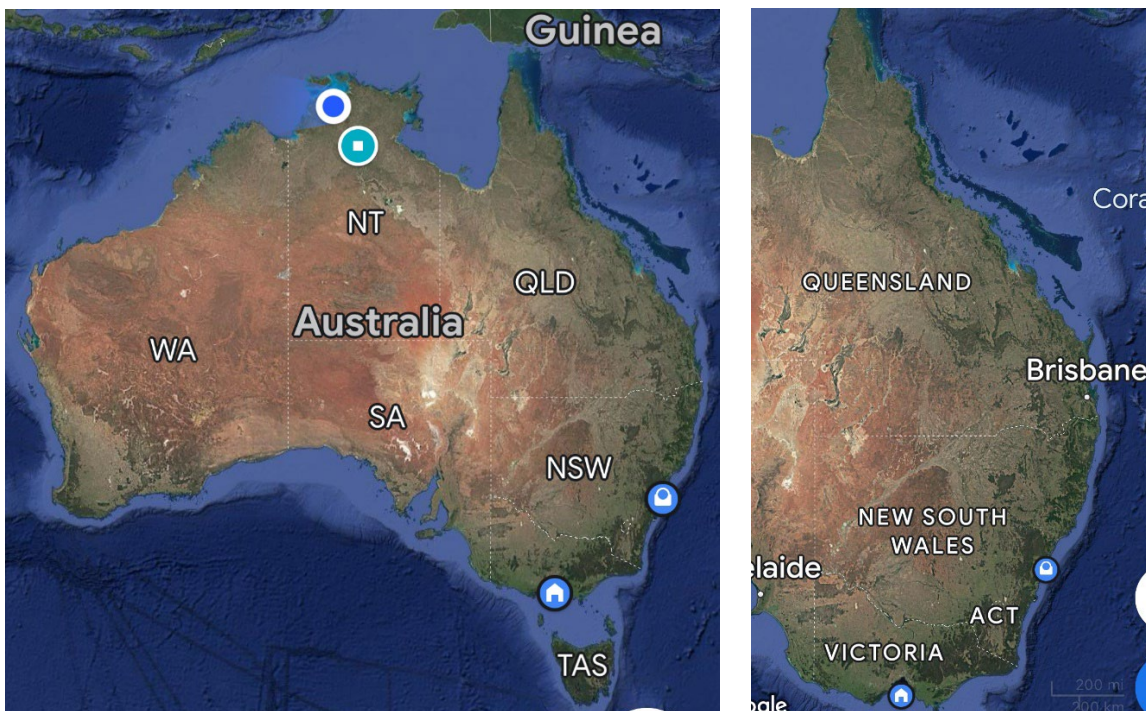
- b) Ecologically: Unfortunately, sustainability in Australian forestry has often mostly been defined in terms of timber sustainability, so “trees will grow back.” And while even that has not been true historically, this is a lot more complicated from an ecological perspective. There is a clear and notable decline for instance in hollow bearing trees. Native forest logging is also not some hardy wood choppers in checkered shirts going into the forest to selectively fell a few stems as some may still believe. As you are well aware, it is a destructive clear-felling operation with heavy machinery, huge wastage and massive disruption. It has significant impact on ecological communities, water security, soil compaction and more. All this is taking place in some of the ever-fewer remaining high biodiversity value areas of our continent. Critically, community groups have proven again and again that the environmental surveys meant to protect threatened species before logging operations are either not carried out properly by Forestry Corporation or the prescribed mechanisms do not work (whether wilfully or accidentally), with citizen scientists finding significantly more individuals of threatened species than the logger’s surveys, indicating that those logging areas should in fact be left alone and that the official surveys are not protecting irreplaceable natural riches.

Many people smarter than me will have hopefully provided you with the exact data, the significance of those forests for our threatened species that are a national treasure. Personally I have experienced first hand over my lifetime how nature retreats at a frightening rate, how the natural balance we all rely on is being dramatically changed continuously and how our ecosystems are dying by not one big blow but a thousand cuts. It is without doubt the responsibility of our generation to not only follow the letters of

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insufficient laws, but to make common sense decisions to turn this obvious process around.

I encourage you to also for once just LOOK at some aerial shots of our country. Have a real look, with an open heart! Doesn't this help to immediately visually understand the incredible significance the remaining forests in NSW have on a national, even international scale? Isn't this really a punch in the gut when you look at this and remember the definition of sustainability "for future generations"? Including all the incredible wildlife those biodiverse forests hold in custody for the entire world. While of course if you are lucky enough to live in the forest regions of NSW it may APPEAR to you as if there's so much forest to go around that it doesn't matter to bulldoze parts of it every day. But I sincerely hope really taking in these images will demonstrate to you why we have such a massive responsibility to preserve whatever little is actually left. If only you really look.



- c) Social well-being: Again, it isn't my intention for one second to downplay the significance that native forest logging must certainly have for someone employed in the industry, possibly for generations. At the same time I also feel that this has been the only social group on the forefront of policy for a long time. It has very likely been the main reason why we have continued native forest logging for this long, despite the obvious signs of it NOT being sustainable neither ecologically nor economically.

I want to draw your attention to the massive effect on other parts of the community who

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without doubt hugely outnumber the people actually affected from working in native forest logging. The vast majority of people in NSW has wanted to see native forest logging stopped for a very long time!

I can personally attest to the immense and soul-destroying eco-grief that I experience every single day. Knowing precious habitat is destroyed by industrial machinery for only the puniest of benefits to some plays a huge part in that. It has at times made me deeply depressed and it hangs over me every day. Writing submissions like this means having to face those feelings and could literally make me burst into tears –but I also have hope that this may finally lead to a better and more truly sustainable way forward. To give you a little of my background: I used to be a producer for animal programs in tv, I have been a wildlife rescuer and carer for over fifteen years and an animal observation volunteer and keeper with Taronga Conservation Society for five years. I have always cared deeply for ecological communities, wildlife and nature. But I am no crazy romantic ‘Greenie’ – I am a scientist, a high achiever and a very sensible, pragmatic person. I have argued this and many other environmental matters with irreputable facts again and again until exhaustion and often to no avail. I know many will again present you with the many very good facts of why we must stop native forest logging. I have deliberately chosen a different path here, to talk about the pain so many people experience deeply because of it. Because I don’t think this is ever seen or properly acknowledged.

Poll after poll shows that the vast majority, always above 90%, of Australians care for the environment and want to see our nature and our wildlife protected much better than it currently is. Many of them similarly suffer despair and grief over the state of affairs, many feel hopeless already that we will just keep ignoring the needs of nature in favour of the short-term gain of some humans. I know this because I talk to them. I am sure if any of you talk to your friends and you will find the same.

And yet, this huge part of society always seems to be thought of as somehow less important than a lot less people’s job that could (and has to be) transformed, someone’s big machine they just bought, someone’s “we’ve always done it this way.” Why is that? Why is the social well-being, the heartfelt, sincere and objectively appropriate eco-grief of so many more Australians so overlooked? And will you be the people to finally change that?

Trust me, having spent a lot of time in the Pilliga, I do understand that logging is a big part of many regional communities. But these jobs can be transitioned to something very similar, to forest care, to work in plantations, to forest guides to name just a few options. Threatened species habitat is irreplaceable, and the many disruptions simply are clearly NOT ecologically sustainable, especially with view to ever increasing pressures from climate change, bushfires etc. Fundamentally, it is and needs to be the forest and its care that these communities revolve around, not cutting it down. There are huge opportunities in this!

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

Continued logging will likely contribute greatly to the extinction of forest dependent wildlife. There is of course much focus on already endangered species such as koalas and greater gliders. At the same time, we have known for a long time that ecosystems are finely interwoven nets that do not fare well with continued profound disruptions such as clear-felling operations and the associated movements and infrastructure. We also need to remember that these take place in conjunction with additional pressures on these systems such as climate change and increasing extreme weather events. Sadly, forestry regulations tend to overlook such additional pressures and focus too strongly on timber harvesting rather than seeing forests sufficiently as complex systems with many different stakeholders as well as habitat for wildlife.

Forests are vital refuges for many threatened species that rely on mature, intact forests. Current operators have proven again and again that they cannot be trusted and that their operations are not compatible with this responsibility. It is not only the 'pattern of offending' that is well documented. A [2021 report](#) by the National Research Council on the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (IFOA) [called for the suspension of timber harvesting](#) for a minimum of three years in three zones it deemed to be at "extreme risk" of serious and irreversible harm to environmental values from the cumulative impacts of fire and harvesting following the 2019/20 bushfires, namely Narooma, Nowra and Taree. It also identified six other zones categorised as "high risk" including threats to vulnerable and critically endangered fauna and flora, such as koalas and the long-nosed potoroo, where logging would be restricted in 75% of the area. Only seven of 27 native forest regions were "low risk", where harvesting could continue under "standard" rules. Instead, logging continued unabated and [the report was made to disappear](#).

Recently a nest of extremely rare coastal emus was found. Forestry Corporation was proud to instigate a 100m exclusion zone. From an industrial logging operation? For an extremely shy species of which only a few individuals are left in the wild?? of days that the emu had left the nest and left unhatched eggs behind. Even though logging was eventually finally stopped in the area, the emu ended up leaving unhatched eggs behind – a horrendous but predictable outcome. There are so many more incidences like this which only prove that native forest logging done in an industrial manner and with contracts to fulfil is not ever going to be compatible with precious and sensitive species we have a massive responsibility to respect, cherish and protect.

Forests also provide important other services to communities, such as:

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- Water quality and flow regulation which is important for water quality, fishing and tourism
- Recreational values for locals and visitors
- Cultural and spiritual significance, especially for indigenous communities, and also for an often-overlooked portion of the rest of the population, who ALSO have a deep and important connection to nature
- Habitat connectivity, supporting biodiversity and ecosystem health

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

Arguments that we need those forests as construction timber etc are false. The vast majority of native forests logged in Australia end up as low-value, short-lived products such as paper pulp, woodchips or pallets. [Research in Victoria](#) showed that only 14% of logs cut from native forests end up as timber products used in buildings and furniture - a low number we can and must make up for by additional plantations. This is even more true since Essential Energy, the electricity network that provides 95% of NSW [phasing out timber poles](#) over the next few years.

On the other hand, hardwood and softwood plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production and have been increasingly so for many years. Shifting the losses, fines and legal costs currently spent on native forest logging can help to buy out supply contracts in the short term and invest into

Looking beyond wood production, our already massively decreased remaining native forests carry significant value for a lot of other reasons: as our natural heritage, for carbon storage, biodiversity, critical species habitat, places of indigenous cultural and spiritual significance, for rain production and water management, soil improvement, recreational value, tourism, and human mental health, to name a few. [Research conducted by Australian National University](#) showed that the value of our forests is significantly higher if left in their natural state to provide environmental and recreational services, including carbon abatement, than being harvested. A recent report by [Frontier Economics](#) estimated a net benefit of more than \$60 million for not logging native forests in the state's south alone. Facing similar issues, both Victoria and Western Australia have already made the decision to end native forest logging by 2024. Even [NSW Liberals](#) had this plan and were only held back by the Nationals. Surely with a new government now in place we can finally make sensible decisions rather than having the tail wag the dog??

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

Softwood and hardwood plantations already supply more than 90% of timber needs. New Zealand managers to get all its timber needs from plantations.

Native Forests should be stringently protected on all lands, whether public or private. Threatened species cannot differentiate between public or private land. I do, however, support farm forestry (in the sense that forest crops are grown, not existing forests taken) as long as strict ecological standards are applied. I also believe that there are fantastic models possible where farm forestry also helps to reforest our lands and to restore for instance riparian systems and habitat connections.

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

I encourage sound strategies to optimise access to a range of activities in forests – as long as this is based on solid ecological considerations first and foremost. Not everything needs to be locked away in a National Park although this will have to be a prime consideration for the majority of our remaining native forests. Activities such as eco-tourism, hiking, access for leashed dog walking in appropriately less sensitive areas, camping, mountain-biking, limited 4WDing and other activities should be encouraged to maximise not only the economic benefit of protecting our precious forests, but also to maximise the immensely beneficial effects nature exposure has for psychological well-being. Study after study has shown that [“walking through forest areas decreased the negative moods of ‘depression-dejection’, ‘tension-anxiety’, ‘anger-hostility’, ‘fatigue’, and ‘confusion’ and improved the participants’ positive mood of ‘vigor’ compared with walking through city areas.”](#) Or [how nature contact is significantly important for children’s wellbeing and how critical it is for children to develop a relationship with nature.](#) I could quote many more examples but the fact is that there are many more benefits of forests than cutting them down which are certainly not sufficiently explored in Australia. There exist significant opportunities here for the welfare of individuals as well as society as a whole. Ending native forest logging is not a question of either logging or naught.

I also strongly support and encourage indigenous forest management models as well as direct indigenous involvement in ecological and environmental management. Fire management is an particularly important aspect to consider. While climate change is the key contributor to increased bushfires and resultant damage, an [expert review of published scientific research](#) by [The Bushfire Recovery Project](#) – a joint project between Griffith University and the Australian National University to provide the Australian community with a scientific

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understanding of bushfires – found that logging in fact increases likelihood and severity of bushfires for decades. ‘Mechanical thinning’ can also increase fire risk. It is high time that we listened to the science and adjusted current fire management regimes.

I therefore support our public forests to be jointly managed with their traditional owners instead, leveraging their thousands of years expertise in managing Australian landscapes with proven biodiversity and fire risk reduction benefits by at least doubling the percentage of [cultural burning as part of hazard reduction](#) burning programs every year.

Protecting and restoring State Forests will increase the economic value through tourism, carbon storage, job creation and recreational opportunities.

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

Logging in native forests releases large amounts of carbon, contributing to climate change. Conversely, healthy forests are essential for reducing the impacts of climate change like wildfires and drought. Ending native forest logging would significantly support climate goals, help mitigate climate risks and support opportunities in carbon markets.

Importantly though, it CANNOT be an argument to delay the end to native forest logging or the establishment of the Great Koala National Park until such decisions can be monetised in any carbon schemes.

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