

Public submission

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Your submission

1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

My on ground experience when visiting local forests, Double Duke SF, Myrtle SF and Braemar SF, in the years 2023 and 2024, bear out the statement below,:

“It is important to understand that it is not just one or two places that are cut in a region in any given year. Rather hundreds of coupes can be logged and the following year, hundreds more. And the same the year after that.” Lindenmayer D.,2024 The Forest Wars, P. 34.

I observed logs discarded on the forest floor, a quiet place with little birdlife and weeds like Lantana dominating the edges of logging tracks – this doesn’t look like sustainability to me. The devastation and thin trunked forest make these local forests sad places to be.

The impacts of fire and flood have forced logging companies to go deeper into our public forests to obtain sawlogs of a commercial size. The result of this activity was witnessed last year in Double Duke State Forest by our group. After the works had been completed and the logging trucks were gone, Fridays4forests ventured into Double Duke to witness the destruction.

Large logs were placed by Forestry Corp employees to block the logging track from through traffic. Old growth trees were reduced to stumps. In Forestry Corp’s bid to reach the wetter intact forest area, they traversed an adjacent wetland with heavy transport vehicles. The deep wheel tracks were in evidence.

Future forestry can only be sustainable if it is Plantation forestry. This type of forestry has been successfully established in NZ and European countries for many years.

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

Our Gondwana forests are precious places - not a resource to be ‘mined’ for money. Further logging of our State Forests risks the more rapid decline of our iconic species such as the koala and Greater Gliders. The coastal forests of NSW are the preferred habitat of these wonderful creatures along with many lesser known threatened species. Once the Gliders were common in our area (Northern NSW). Now we never see them. Our home is being changed forever by development and forestry. There must be hope for a more sustainable future but regulation and guidance from our government is sorely needed. My hope is that the Independent Forestry Panel will recommend a change for the better in our State forest management systems.

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

I am in the process of building my own forever home in the Northern Rivers. So, I can comment from a personal perspective regarding the timber products used in the construction of my home.

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We used old fence posts to create decking and cladding. We used old corrugated iron, and 2nd hand basins, taps etc. What gave us a big surprise, was that the LVLs that formed big beams in our ceilings, were made from plantation pine laminated for strength but it came from Finland! This was definitely not in our planning. It does however, demonstrate that the overseas product was readily available and competitive with the Australian products. NSW obviously needs more plantations. Additionally, we obtained Qld Plantation Hoop pine for our windows and doors. I no longer trust NSW FSC ratings after visiting our State Forests locally.

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

As I am not an industry expert, I cannot comment on the needs of the timber industry. I would like to add though, that I am deeply concerned re Private Native Forestry. I believe a significant amount of forest exists on private land. In our part of NSW (Northern Rivers), many private properties have functioning forests with habitat containing much wildlife.

Our local Councils have in the past been managing their local private forests allowing some logging to occur in appropriate ways that are acceptable for their area – taking into account impacts on neighbours, transport and health issues. I agree that the Councils should be able to control the activity of local private native forest logging.

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

Firstly, let me be very clear, our forests are not being managed well. My lived experience of going into several State forests locally means seeing is believing. Braemar, Myrtle and Double Duke State forests were all impacted severely by the 2019 fires then the 2022 flooding events. There are large patches of burnt out forest still not recovered – as evidenced by the burnt sticks of trees and flush of undergrowth. All seemingly totally unmanaged. Recently, Forestry Corp is back in there logging what's left of Myrtle and Braemar right now.

A new model is desperately needed.

1. Transitioning Forest workers to remediating our damaged forests, developing plantations and learning how to become custodians of our national asset rather than continuing to use up the forest as a diminishing resource.
2. The fire stick farming of our 1st Nation could be utilised Statewide to lessen the severity of fires. The old knowledge of our traditional custodians should be part of any management system of our forests.
3. Promoting the “good bits” that are left in our State forests to encourage urbanites to connect with nature. The mental health benefits of taking time in old growth have been documented historically.

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4. Forestry Corp is unprofitable. A \$26 million loss last year. A better managed organisation is definitely needed. Independent scientists and ecologists should be involved to safeguard forests from further raiding of our precious public resources.

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

An immediate end to native forest logging would allow the State targets on emissions to have a chance of being achieved. It's a no brainer.

After reading Professor David Lindenmayer's book ,“Forest Wars”, I understood that a logged forest is drier and more susceptible to fires than an unlogged forest. The moisture content in an intact forest is a protection from the severity of wildfires. Let's end native forest logging now.

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