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

Forestry Corporation's claims of sustained yields have been proven to be gross over-estimates. Since the 2010, yields from state forests have declined by 40% from 1.3 million tonnes down to 0.8 million tonnes in 2023 and are currently only 61% of estimated sustained yields, with the massive loss of resources in the 2019/20 fires yet to be factored in. It is a 'tree mining operation' that has only been able to be maintained by removing protections for most mature trees and increasing logging intensity in 2018.

Logging of native forests is not sustainable as it has reduces carbon storage, depletes mature trees and their abundance of nectar and browse for many species, depletes old growth trees and the hollows that 174 of NSW's species depend upon for dens and nests, increases fire threat and intensity, reduces stream flows, promotes weeds and dieback, and increases erosion and stream pollution.

The NSW government could look at the precedent set by the Victorian government, which ended native forest logging in January 2024, and refer to the Victorian government's forestry transition program: <https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/forestry/forestry-transition-program>

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

Forests generate rainfall and cool the land, provide homes for threatened species, are important for recreation and improved health, and filter and regulate runoff to streams. If we want to save endangered species such as iconic Koalas and Greater Gliders, it is essential that we stop logging across NSW.

First Nations across NSW have significant cultural heritage and songlines in state forests.

Gumbaynggirr custodians have taken repeated legal action to protect cultural heritage and values from logging operations:

<https://www.mauriceblackburn.com.au/media-centre/media-statements/2024/renewed-concerns-over-logging-in-newry-state-forest-following-end-of-court-action-for-traditional-owners/>

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

Native hardwoods comprised 2.4 million (9%) of Australia's log production of 25 million cubic metres in 2023, with half this exported as woodchips. Saw and veneer logs comprised just 8% of the 8.5 million cubic metres of logs obtained from hardwood plantations, with 87% exported as woodchips. There is no longer any need to log public native forests to build houses. With a change in emphasis we can satisfy our hardwood needs with sawn timber and composite timber products from well-designed plantations, small-scale farm forestry (1), and other ethical sources (2).

1. <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/crops-and-horticulture/farm-forestry>

2. <https://ceresfairwood.org.au/>

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

Hardwood and softwood plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production. The proportion of saw and veneer logs obtained from hardwood plantations needs to be increased, rather than being exported as woodchips. Without competition from subsidised public forests there will be an increased incentive for production of speciality purpose hardwoods from private forests.

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

There are 2 million hectares of State Forests in NSW that provide water for numerous town reservoirs, have the potential to contribute to increased tourism, and store carbon. All these real economic values will improve if logging is stopped.

In 2023 Forestry Corporation lost \$15 million on their hardwood operations, that's a cost of \$1,281 for each hectare logged. This is despite being paid \$31 million for their community service obligations that year, and obtaining millions in regular equity injections. It is in the best interest of taxpayers to stop logging of public native forests.

There is no social licence for native forest logging, as consistently demonstrated by ongoing community protests across NSW.

Isolated protected areas are not enough. Logging must cease in all NSW state forests. An immediate moratorium on logging in areas of high density Koala and Greater Glider populations must be implemented, while the panel process is underway.

Government return 'public forests' to First Nations custodians and ensure land justice outcomes. First Nations designed reserves that value Traditional Custodians' self-determination and cultural knowledge, as well as exclude all industrial extractive activity, should replace 'state forest' land categories to protect forests from irresponsible resource extraction in an enduring way.

First Nations Cultural knowledge and western ecological science should work together to manage and restore forested landscapes across NSW.

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

Native forest logging in NSW releases 3.6 million tonnes of carbon (CO₂e) per year, which is equivalent to the annual emissions of 840,000 cars. The volume of carbon stored in logged forests has been halved. Stopping logging will enable forests to regain their lost carbon and make a significant contribution to meeting our climate targets. As shown by the 2019/20 wildfires, increasing droughts and fires due to climate heating are already having a significant impact on trees, forest species and rainforests, it is essential that logging is stopped to allow forests to reduce the impacts of climate heating by removing CO₂ from the atmosphere, and recover their integrity to better withstand future disasters. Intact native forests store significantly more carbon than logged and regenerated native forests (Keith et al. 2014). Native forest logging generates large amounts of emissions. Indeed, a key way to reach Australia's 2030 GHG reduction targets will be to stop native forest logging. In fact, a major step down in native forest logging in Tasmania had major positive benefits on the carbon accounts in that State (Mackey et al. 2022). Increased carbon storage in intact native forests can be included in State and National carbon accounts. Carbon does not have to be traded to show benefits and this will avoid the gaming that has characterised substantial parts of the carbon trading industry in Australia (e.g. Macintosh et al.

2024). The biodiversity benefits of intact native forests have been well documented (Mackey et al. 2015, Watson et al. 2018). The best way to maintain the biodiversity values of native forests is to stop logging them, including in NSW (Ward et al. 2024).