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

Thank you for allowing me to submit my opinion.

My interest in the management of native forests began serendipitously while doing reconnaissance for a bushwalk. As a walks leader for a bushwalking club I am always looking for new areas to explore and was investigating an area west of Herons Creek on the mid north coast of NSW. My fellow walker and I found a creek line of rainforest and my partner told me it was part of a plantation. To my mind, there was no way it could be so I started down the worm hole of resolving this. My research revealed that it was indeed marked as part of a plantation in the Bulls Ground State forest.

I undertook the collation of historical aerial imaging from the NSW Government website (<https://portal.spatial.nsw.gov.au/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f7c215b873864d44bccdda8075238cb>)

and Google Earth Pro and ground-truthed the area measuring tree circumference and listing species in three areas. The areas were not planted and had been untouched as far as aerial photography had been conducted-over 60 years. Presentation of this evidence to Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW) resulted in changing their harvest plan to leave these areas untouched. This was a good result but had me questioning how a 'mug punter' like me could discover this yet skilled workers within FCNSW could not. I then discovered, mere kilometres away in Broken Bago State Forest, a similar area that had been logged yet had the same characteristics as the other areas I had discovered. FCNSW did not answer why this had happened and I formed the opinion that if no one is watching then due process is not followed. As it turns out there are others who have shown that this is the case in many areas of the north coast forests.

My conclusions, after pursuing this line of investigation in other areas, is that unsustainable practices are undertaken. As a leader of bush walks my adventures take me through many areas of state forest and my observation is that the forestry practices reduce the sustainability of local biodiversity. Original species of trees and diversity of undergrowth are sacrificed for preferred species and it is more mining of the land rather than any practice likely to sustain biodiversity. I observe no efforts to have forest regenerate in their original form. Some people coin the term 'conversion' for the observed changes and I feel this is quite reflective of what happens. Additionally the understorey is susceptible to invasive weeds and the real beauty of the original forest seems irrecoverably compromised.

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

I feel their value has been proven time and time again and requires no further debate .

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

Given my opinion that there is no role for what is an unsustainable industry, timber should be sourced from areas outside natural forests rather than 'mining' what is already in forests.

Plantations on agricultural land will preserve native forest and if timber is from planted sources only, it can be managed sustainably. Other agricultural products prove that this is possible.

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

I believe that Private Native Forestry continues the degradation of the forest estate and that, as above, sourcing timber from outside natural areas is the best option for a sustainable industry.

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

The NSW state forests have a great range of values that don't involve an extraction industry. Bike/hike trails and tree tops adventures and other recreations allow people to flourish and connect with the environment. Their role in keeping water and air quality acceptable, in contributing to the mitigation of climate extremes is sufficient justification to manage them as the unmined, diverse, natural systems that they have been for countless years and caringly managed by the indigenous forebears.

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

A situation where native forests were reserved to offset the production of plantation timber seems to me to be a suitable arrangement. I see no offset scheme working if the implication here is to offset native forest harvesting.

A great anomaly to my mind is the burning of forest residue. I feel the evidence is clear that this exacerbates greenhouse emissions and the benefits to a reduced greenhouse emissions is an outdated and unproven claim. This practice needs to be ceased.