

Public submission

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Submission to the Independent Forestry Panel regarding the consultation on the sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW, ahead of the NSW Government developing its Forestry Industry Action Plan.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments to the Independent Forestry Panel regarding the consultation on the sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW.

We need to end Native Forest Logging now.

Australia's native (old growth) forests play a viable role for all Australians and the world.

Native forests:

- clean the air we breathe
- purify water
- store large amounts of carbon
- provide multiple benefits for Indigenous communities
- support nature-based businesses,
- attract tourists
- benefit people's physical and mental health
- mitigate the effects of climate change
- provide important habitat, including larger hollow-bearing trees, for forest-dependent species in the midst of an extinction crisis that threatens many species unique to Australia.

Besides the large number of benefits that native forests provide, they are still being destroyed by logging in NSW. Given the constantly increasing negative impacts of climate change on nature and consequently on people we need to act where we can. If we keep destroying our forests, we destroy ecosystems, species and ever more important carbon sinks.

There are alternatives for the timber and associated industries. Timber should exclusively come from plantations. There is no such thing as sustainable timber from native forests. Also, native forest timber is mainly used for low quality products such as firewood, wood chips and fencing. Given this, it is more than irresponsible to destroy irreplaceable old growth forests. Furthermore the forestry industry is heavily subsidised by taxpayers and contributes nothing to the economy. Cessation of native forest logging in the Southern and Eden RFA areas alone would produce a net economic benefit to the state of approximately \$60 million, while also reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by almost one million tonnes (Mt) per year over the period 2022-2041.

I am asking for urgent action to phase out native forest logging and protect Australian wildlife including all species at risk of extinction, and regional communities. It would be highly embarrassing for Australia to admit to the entire world that we managed to make Koalas extinct in the wild. NSW and Tasmania have to follow Victoria and WA and cease native forest logging.

My children often ask me why ministers are making decisions that progress species extinction and destroy our nature forever, although they should be able to do better than that. Every time I struggle to give them a sensible answer.

The list of benefits that our native forests offer if we leave them standing clearly outweighs the economical benefits of supporting the NSW Native Forest Logging industry. Putting an end to native forest logging in NSW would support various NSW government initiatives, such as cutting emissions by 50% by 2030, doubling koala numbers by 2050, handback of lands to Indigenous communities, growth in nature-based tourism in the regions, increasing supply of low-carbon housing construction materials in the long term, reducing plastic pollution, and protecting and enhancing natural capital.

Native forest logging needs to be phased out in Australia. We need to act now or species like the Greater Glider, Spotted-tailed Quoll and Swift Parrot will be lost forever.

Grit Schuster

