

DENIS ROTHWELL

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**Organisation:** *Hunter Environment Lobby*

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**Location:** *New South Wales*

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

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At least 174 NSW native species rely on tree hollows for dens or nests to raise their young. These hollows mainly occur in mature trees. Protection of mature trees was removed in 2018, to increase timber yield which further reduced the number of hollows for nesting, thus pushing native species further towards extinction. Despite this, the yield from native forests has reduced by 40% since 2010. This is a clear indication of the unsustainability of native forest logging

Logging of native forests reduces biomass and carbon storage capacity.

Native forest logging reduces the health and functions of waterways within these forests, by surface disturbance and soil erosion allowing soil to wash into waterways.

Native forest logging creates intensified fires due to regrowth being mostly of the similar age after logging. It also increases invasion of weed and other species into forests, degrading the forest, which may need to be controlled.

Timber yields from native forests have been consistently overestimated by the Forestry Corporation leading to more logging of areas with logging constraints.

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

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At least 174 NSW native species are directly affected by logging native forests. Hollows in mature trees provide nests and dens for native species to raise their young. The unavailability of these hollows after logging pushes native species further towards extinction. Native forest logging compromises many ecosystems and habitats throughout NSW.

Forests, particularly, mature native forests, generate rain, clean the air and cool the landscape. They also have great aesthetic value.

Mature, unlogged native forests are critical for pollinators and play a key role in pollination across the landscape, both inside and outside the forest.

Healthy native forests are critical to a healthy environment and hold significant spiritual and cultural value to both indigenous and non-indigenous people.

Native forests provide both recreation and improved mental and physical health for both locals and visitors and have economic tourism potential. They are also a source of community pride and connection to place.

First nations people have ongoing connection to native forests and forest landscapes are an integral part of cultural practice and knowledge

New South Wales Government must honour their election promise and create the Great Koala park rather than continuing to log parts of it, to take pressure of the iconic Endangered Koala

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

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Half of the logs taken from NSW native forests were turned into wood chip and exported in 2023.

Logging in native forests accounted for only 9% of the total log production in Australia in 2023. Native forest logging contributes only 2.4 million of the 25 million cubic metres.

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Half of the native forest logs taken in 2023 were chipped and exported.

Native Forest hardwoods are no longer exclusively necessary for uses identified in this section, due to an increase in laminated and glued timber building products. Sawn and treated softwood and composite timber products can substitute for both native and plantation hardwood timbers.

The market and demand for native forest timbers is declining rapidly. An example of this is Essential Energy recently moving away from hardwood poles harvested from native forests.

New South Wales could easily follow the lead of Western Australia and Victoria and ban native forest logging.

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

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Plantations already supply 91% of Australia's log production.

More plantation hardwoods could be used as saw and veneer logs rather than the current 8%, rather than exporting them as woodchips.

High end and luxury hardwood native hardwood products should only be selectively harvested under strict conditions, from private plantations

Subsidies paid by the Forestry Corporation to harvest public native forest are anti-competitive and must be stopped. These subsidies distort the market away from the more profitable softwood plantation industry

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#### **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**

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Native Forests cover an area of 2 million hectares in NSW and impact on a diverse range of living conditions for many towns from water quality in reservoirs to greater tourism opportunities, and carbon storage and abatement.

The native forest division of the Forestry Corporation runs at a huge loss, at the expense of the NSW public. It also receives regular equity injections from public funds.

The people of NSW should not be paying to destroy biodiversity and critical habitat for Endangered Species.

Unlogged Native Forests have real and tangible benefits to the entire ecology and economy of NSW

First Nations Ranger Programs have been very successful at managing the health and recovery of native forests and should be expanded. Programs like the Githabul Rangers have shown how First Nations knowledge and management can restore the natural and critical functions of forests in the landscape.

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#### **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**

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Native forest logging in NSW is shown to release 3.6 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere each year.

Ending native logging would be the equivalent of removing 840 thousand cars from the roads each year.

Ending Native Forest logging will allow previously logged areas to regain lost carbon and make significant contributions to our emissions targets

Logging in a native forest reduces the amount of stored carbon by more than half of the original value.

## Public submission

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Forest that have not been logged are more resilient to fires and to the changing conditions brought on by Climate Change.

Please stop logging Native Forests!