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Submission ID: 205321

Organisation: N/A

Location: Australian Capital Territory

Supporting materials uploaded: N/A

Submission date: 10/13/2024 11:51:41 PM

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

Native forest logging is unsustainable from a number of angles. It is unsustainable for the environment, as it damages, and in many cases, completely destroys habitat for species including threatened species. It contributes to GHG emissions. It removes a functioning natural carbon sequestration system. It damages water flows in the ecosystem and leads to the drying out of lands and forests. It is unsustainable economically as well, requiring huge state subsidies to keep it viable. It has a history of breaches of environmental regulations meant to protect water courses, threatened species and other values. Efforts in forestry should be put towards plantation forestry run on good environmental practices. This is where the high value timber products are, and it is criminal to use native forests for wood chips and pallets when their ecosystem services are of such a high value.

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

The preservation of NSW native forests is essential for the protection of biodiversity, especially threatened species such as the Greater Glider and the koala. The environmental values of the unfelled forests is immense. They protect water catchments, ecosystems, wildlife, and threatened species. Only intact forest can do this. The fallacy of habitat trees left in a clear-fell zone is tragic, for most of those species die as their food and shelter has been logged and cleared away. Logging of native forests leads to a drying out of the ground where the forest once stood and leaves the whole area more susceptible to fire. Old growth forests are more fire resistant than young forests. Young forests do not provide the ecosystem services that an old forest provides, such as nesting hollows, food resources, habitat for a multitude of species. Another environmental aspect of the standing forest is that it is a carbon store that continues removing carbon from the atmosphere as long as the trees remain growing. Forestry activities release carbon into the atmosphere making the climate crisis worse. Forests also have cultural and heritage values especially to First Nations people who have close ties with the land. Their songlines and belief systems are interwoven with the living forest and to log the forests destroys their links to the land. Traditional owners have stated again and again that they do not want the forests logged, and want to see them protected. Continuing to ignore the wishes of these Traditional Custodians perpetuates the colonial dismissal of Aboriginal ownership and custodianship of the land.

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

Plantation forests can provide all the timber products required for housing, construction, mining, transport and retail. There is no need to log native forests for these purposes.

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

Softwood and hardwood plantations should continue. They provide most of the high value timber products. Private Native Forestry should be restricted to preserve ecosystems and species, and specifically there should be no conversion of native forests to plantation 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

State Native Forests should not be logged - this will maximise the delivery of a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes (such as tourism). It will provide climate services in that the forests store huge amounts of carbon and will continue to sequester carbon as long as they are left standing. Forest Gardening as suggested by some to replicate Aboriginal management practices is a sleight of hand. There is no evidence for it in the tall wet forests. It is just a way to gain access to forests previously unavailable for logging on a faulty pretext. Logging forests does not assist them. There was a similar argument mounted in some of the box-ironbark forests in Victoria to 'coppice' the trees as the belief was that the forest was once composed of large widely separated trees. But coppicing did not restore that arrangement, it just led to more destruction of the ecosystem, one that was rare anyway due to clearing for farming.

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

Carbon and biodiversity markets are another huge swindle. The Australian carbon markets have been found to lack integrity, and it is extremely doubtful that any marketisation of biodiversity will be any better. It will certainly not have any positive benefits for endangered or threatened species and ecosystems. Logging of forests contributes to GHG emissions. Leaving forests standing and growing stores carbon and continues to capture it as the forest grows. With climate change impacts happening now (witness the 2019-20 fires) it is imperative that we protect all remaining native forests. The more intact they are the more resistant to fire they are. They will continue to provide ecosystem services such as water retention and filtration, habitat and threatened species protection, while ever they remain standing.