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

The present practice of industrial style, 40 tonne harvester logging operations are not sustainable in our local hardwood forests. These forests lie on the most erodible soil beds in NSW. The landscape is all very steep with most slopes ranging between 25 to 60 degrees on any ridge line. Our organisation has consistently argued that these forests should not be logged for these reasons alone. The mid North Coast forests also experience very high rainfall. 2- 3 metres per year with more intense storms now the norm.

The river catchments of the river systems of the Kalang, Bellinger and Nambucca rivers rely on intact forests in their headwaters to ensure water security which we think should be a priority over continued logging. These rivers provide potable drinking water to tens of thousands of people and is therefore a critical priority for the future wellbeing of our communities.

New research by Lindenmeyer and other academics shows that logged forests are more susceptible to fire threat, fires burn hotter in logged forests and are more susceptible to erosion, sediment run off and the invasion of weeds.

This is particularly relevant to our forests and most hardwood forests on the MNC (Mid North Coast)

Forests we have been actively trying to protect survived the 2019 bushfires because they are still largely intact and at present undisturbed and in recovery from the previous logging cycle. They are also moist forests because of the buffer zones of previously protected rainforest and old growth remnants. (Enacted by previous Labour governments)

Any intervention to this present balance could be disastrous to downstream communities.

But we are just one example of many communities on the MNC who rely on intact forests for water security and and a buffer against the ravages of climate change weather events.

Since the 2019 bushfires there has been a recognition of the fact that millions of native species were killed and many populations put to the brink of extinction. Indeed, it has been called the extinction crisis. So therefore, we see it as even more important now to save the remaining intact , unburnt forests for the continued preservation of the many native animal and plant species made more vulnerable by that event.

As we speak, our forests are being considered for inclusion in the Great Koala National Park and yet, are still being actively logged in 13 harvesting operations within the proposed boundaries. We find this totally unacceptable given the importance of these forests in the future sustainability of valuable ecosystems.

As we stated, KRFA feel very privileged to be the guardians of forests that contain a large number of mature , hollow bearing trees that are backbone of native animal preservation for the future. Unfortunately, these are the trees that FCNSW target in their logging operations. Mature trees, often over a hundred years old. Blackbutt, Tallowood, Brush Box, Blue Gum, Red Mahogany, White Mahogany. All flowering gums, providing food and refuge to native species, many on the verge of extinction.

We feel the benefits of preservation far outweigh the benefits of continued logging.

Our headwater forests are home to Koalas, Greater Gliders, Sugar Gliders, Glossy Black Cockatoos, Quolls, Rufus Scrub Birds, Lizards, Snakes, Great Barred Frog, Spagnum Frog and many more vulnerable and endangered species too numerous to mention.

Economically, we see no justification for the present situation that sees FCNSW heavily subsidised by the taxpayer to literally clearfell large areas of native forest. The word 'Corporation' is a misnomer. Any corporation that ran like FCNSW would have been out of business years ago. Indeed, it is only because of the subsidies that it survives at all.

While FC NSW received \$249 mill in subsidies during 2019-2020 it lost \$28 mill. (Frontier Economics)

The whole economic model is wrong and needs to go back to the drawing board. The economic landscape for forestry is changing fast and there needs to be renewed attention given to more sustainable timber production practice, especially the expansion of plantation based production. Native forest logging should not be in the mix. It should be phased out as soon as possible with a transition plan enabled by government, industry and relevant stakeholders.

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

KRFA have had the privilege of working with local indigenous people and and have experienced first hand their deep connection to the forest and nature. We have also been included in smoking ceremonies and rituals intended to give us a deeper connection with the forest. First nations cultural heritage depends on intact and connected corridors of native forest with its totemic flora and fauna.

Local elder Micklo Jarrett has passed on his deep knowledge of local plants and animals. It is obvious that the local indigenous people have a deep and long standing connection with the local forest environments. He explained to us how they would even make small bird nests by hand to replace nests of a bird very special to them that was affected by logging and fire. This demonstrated to us how much they care about their natural environment. Micklo insists that creatures and plants in these forests are all connected, that one cannot exist without the other. We have also experienced the power of the forest to create healing experiences and create a sense of wonder in people who visit the special places we take them to that are not normally visited by outside visitors. Inevitably we come across many of the endangered and vulnerable species during these visits and point them out. When we tell people that many of these species are on the brink of extinction they are shocked. They often can't believe that these forests are about to be logged. Many of the 269 nationally listed threatened species live in our local forests of the Kalang, Bellingen and Nambucca. KRFA and our supporters had spent much time exploring the head waters forests of Kalang and are constantly amazed at the complexity and diversity within these forests. It is obvious to us and all visitors that these forests are much more important as a future refuge not only for animals and plants but also for humans. Forests prevent extinction of many endangered fauna and flora species and thereby maintain biodiversity that humans rely on.

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

KRFA holds a regular stall at our local community market once a month and are often asked by visitors how do we justify restricting the availability of hardwood timber to the construction industries. We tell them that on a local level we see most hardwood logs processed in the Bellingen Shire turned into pallet timber or wood chips. We argue that this is not a very good use for such a valuable product and that indeed if these trees were left in the ground they would actually generate around \$40 million per year for the people of NSW in carbon credits.

Furthermore, we tell them that the demand for hardwood timber in the building industry is

dwindling. The housing construction industry especially, now uses pine softwood, laminate beams and composite materials as the main timber based materials . Admittedly some hardwood is used for joinery and decking material. Native forest logging now accounts for only 9% of all the timber used in the construction industries. This is equivalent to 2.4 million cubic metres. Many industries such as electricity providers and the pallet industry are moving across to composite materials such as recycled plastic and concrete electricity poles. These are just two examples of the changes that are happening across many of these industries so therefore it seems to us that hardwood sourced from native forests can be easily replaced by materials from other sources over the short to medium term.

Timber product demand can be met by plantation, agroforestry and engineered timber products from those sustainable sources.

The current tax payer subsidised logging of native forest for low value product such as tomato stakes, pulp and wood chip is unacceptable

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

KRFA has access to much peer reviewed research material published by reputable think tanks, university academics and forestry specialists. The consensus among this community is that plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production. It is obvious that investment in hardwood plantations and softwood plantations should be a priority and that secure and guaranteed Australian supply of quality logs and veneer timber should be prioritised rather than exporting this product as wood chips. Forestry corporation NSW generates a profit in it's softwood sector as opposed to its deep losses in the hardwood sector.

Plantation and agroforestry are sustainable and profitable. They need long term planning and environmental guidelines for private land holders to enable viable and sustainable efficiencies.

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

KRFA has maintained publicly for many years that our local headwater forests, rich in diversity and ecological complexity are much more valuable public assets being preserved for future generations to enjoy. To also contribute to the ongoing need to protect what is left of our truly wild lands and environments to help sustain an ecological future. The state forests of NSW, consisting of 2,000,000 hectares being preserved could open up inestimable benefits in terms of ecotourism, create a stable natural landscape that can protect us from the excesses of climate change and put a halt to the extinction crisis that NSW in particular is experiencing. Surely this is much more valuable to our long term survival then a yearly \$20 million loss and thousands of hectares of prime forest habitat wiped out. In our own area we recently engaged the University of Newcastle to research the benefits both economically, socially and environmentally of creating the Great koala National Park. They estimated that the benefits of preserving local forests for ecotourism far outweighed the benefits of continued logging. Ecotourism in particular was going to be the driver for thousands of new jobs over a 10 year period. In the areas of accommodation, tour rangers, forest infrastructure maintenance and service jobs.

As our organisation has got to know the true complexity and diversity and scenic grandeur of our local forests we realised what the potential could be for the local economy if these wondrous places could be preserved. Infrastructure created such as visitor centres ,campgrounds, hiking trails, bird watching hides..all on a truly grand scale. Around every corner there are views to die for. The vastness of this area creates an impact which goes beyond economic value. It could be a

viable and sustainable future for our children, indigenous people, ex forest workers, machinery operators and trades people. A win - win for the environment and local communities.

A particular benefit delivered to our local indigenous community. The Gumbaynggiir people have been caretakers of this environment for thousands of years and have a deep intimate knowledge of all the plants and animals within the forest landscape. Not only that, but they have a deep spiritual connection which they are able to transmit on a very real level to visitors and locals alike. Turning these forests into one connected landscape would help create jobs for the local indigenous community in the areas of culture, education and Land Management. Creating jobs as land managers, Bush regenerators, guides and rangers, not to mention the opportunity to promote their arts and crafts.

Indigenous land management principles offer a wealth of knowledge as well as responsible custodianship that was sustainable for thousands of years compared to the extraction approach that has seen decimation in 200 years.

In areas like the mid North Coast, ecotourism will be a big part of our economic future. But ecotourism economies need clean rivers, healthy rivers, healthy forests, diverse and healthy wildlife, unspoiled places, quiet sanctuaries and places of solitude. Fortunately, many of our local forests still have these qualities and are a resource waiting to be tapped. For the benefit of all.

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 paper released by the Australia institute estimated that logging operations in NSW forests contribute 3.6 million cubic metres of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year. They also estimated that the NSW taxpayer would be better off to the tune of \$40 million each year from carbon credits. Therefore, by leaving trees in the ground we would save 3.6 million cubic metres of CO₂ and make \$40 million for doing nothing except watch the trees grow and sequester more carbon.

Recent research also indicates that older trees sequester more carbon than younger trees. This is the reverse of an often-mooted claim by the forest industry that young growing trees store more carbon. This is not true. Thus, again it can be asserted that mature Native forests absorb significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere.

Logging of native forests inhibits the ability of the surviving forest to absorb carbon at the same rate before logging by up to 50%.

As one commentator mentioned recently, we still haven't come up with a better carbon sequestration unit than a tree.

Protecting native forest is climate action. They store carbon.

We must also stop using timber for electricity generation.