

Public submission

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Independent Forestry Panel Submission

Kirsty Parker-Administration Manager for M&M Timbers (Two Matt's Pty Ltd) Native Harvest Contract.

I am pleased that the panel have invited stakeholders to make a submission. I would welcome the opportunity in the coming stages of the industry action plan to engage the panel in a site visit and discussion to show firsthand how our Native harvesting operation is conducted under principle contractor to FCNSW, Mathew Parker, in one of our wonderful state Forests.

Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW.

Being involved in a selective native harvesting contract for the past thirteen years with Forestry Corporation NSW, I feel I can confidently say that there have been significant changes implemented to achieve the sustainability of the industry while balancing economic and environmental outcomes.

The challenges faced over recent years with bushfires, covid19 and floods may look like just an economic loss by FCNSW but let's remember that the industry employs over 8900 people who all individually contributing to that same economy.

The interruptions by blockades or protestors on site and the reporting to the EPA by members of these groups, has also hindered the continuity of operations whilst the claims are being investigated. This has had a negative economic impact and when the reporting has been unfounded has been totally unnecessary.

The technology continues to improve with the use of the Map app system on iPads to ensure the highly regulated protocols of the coastal integrated forest operations approval agreement (CIFOA) are followed.

To improve the outcomes of these forestry practises I strongly believe there needs to be an inclusion of harvest operators to the discussions when these practises are decided upon. These operators are in these forests every working day of the year and for most of them, this has been for many years. They see what is beneficial and what is not beneficial for the health and sustainability of the forests and have a desire to keep the forest and all flora and fauna in it for generations to come.

The negative perceptions being conveyed in relation to forestry operations and the misinformation being publicised needs to be disputed and corrected. The positive impacts of well managed operations need to be heard, seen and promoted.

Harvesting operations have been undertaken for well over 100years and many of the operators are the 3rd, 4th, and 5th generation in their family to participate in the industry. This is also the case for many mill owners, truck drivers and mill workers. There is

collectively a wealth of knowledge and passion between the people in the timber industry. I personally know many of these people and the main goal is to keep the industry for generations to come.

I strongly encourage and would welcome all panel members and any other individuals taking part in the decision-making process of this industry action plan to visit our native harvesting operation.

Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and aboriginal cultural heritage values.

Harvest plans for each compartment of forest include environmental and cultural values of that specific forest. Those plans have the prescriptions of the CIFOA meticulously mapped out for each operator to have access to on the iPads provided by forestry corporation NSW. This ensures that the operators remain compliant with the regulations and allow the monitoring of this compliance by the environmental protection agency (EPA).

Whilst I am aware there have been times when mistakes have been made and substantial penalties have been handed out for those mistakes, I believe what the public don't hear is the corrective actions taken by FCNSW to mitigate those mistakes. Often the publications of those mistakes take place up to 3 years after the incidents occur and the corrective actions are being implemented immediately after the mistake has been identified. Let's face it, we are all only human and mistakes are not made on purpose as we are aware how critical it is to get it right.

The current management and supervision of selective harvesting shows the prescriptions placed on harvest operations to ensure the protection of threatened species, are very successful, harvesting having minimal to no effect on animal populations.

An example is shown in the results of a 7-year study conducted by DPI including Dr Brad Law;

“An analysis of recent trends in Koala occupancy in hinterland forests of north-eastern NSW, where surveys targeted their habitat and were based on recordings of Koala calls, provided greater precision and higher estimates of occupancy (averaging 68% ± 7%). This recent trend shows a stable meta-population over the last 5 years, including after fires burnt 30% of Koala habitat in 2019.” [Monitoring Koalas in the public Hinterland Forests of North-east NSW and the effect of 2019 fires on the meta-population](#)

More recently, I am aware studies have been conducted as part of the process to assess the proposed Great Koala National Park area. I believe from those studies there has also been some positive results on Koala numbers in well managed forests. I am hoping and looking forward to those results becoming public when they have been validated. This also raises the question of do we even really need a GKNP?

Aboriginal cultural heritage values are considered in the planning of the harvesting compartments also, these values are always taken seriously and as a person with Aboriginal heritage myself, I appreciate the efforts of all involved in the planning and mapping process.

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

Native Forest Selective harvesting produces timber that is separated into several grades and only some of them and their uses are listed below.

Poles grade; used for poles for utility services, native fauna refuges and highway crossings, jetties, wharves.

Piles; used for jetties and bridges

Girders; bridges

Veneer; used for plywood for internal and external building and formwork

High Quality Sawlog; flooring construction

Low Quality Sawlog; mining timber, sleepers, fencing, pallet, agricultural supports(Fruit farms), Retail tables restaurants chopping boards windows

Firewood; heat homes and cooking

Importing timber from overseas makes no sense when we have the product here it is 100% renewable, highly regulated with environmental sustainability Rather than shutting the industry down we should be building it up.

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

Softwood plantations, hardwood plantations and private native forestry are all critical to the timber supply but need to be supplemented by public Native forestry.

More plantations would be beneficial however land availability for more plantations seems to be restricted and harvesting operations are also interrupted by protest activity which is disappointing given the trees were planted for the sole purpose of harvesting and supplying timber products.

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.

As evident in most businesses, the economic outcomes are generally of the highest importance.

The social outcome of being employed, earning a living and providing for your family and community is just as important and the timber industry plays a significant role in regional areas to deliver that employment opportunity.

Given the many challenges faced over the past few years eg. Bushfires, Covid 19 and flooding, I believe the only path we can now take is to look at the long term future rather than restricting it to one financial year at a time.

Although state forests have a focus on the environmental model, I believe improvements can be made by re-structuring the timing and management of the silviculture practises. This could be done by incorporating practices during a harvest operation by the harvesting operators, rather than implementing it separately after a harvest is completed. Not only would it be more consistent and have an economic saving, but it would also have a better environmental impact.

I reiterate that the inclusion of the contracted harvest operators to the discussion when making forest operation decisions is imperative as they are field experts, and they are carrying out the regulated practises.

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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 an assessment of climate change risks to forests.

My understanding is that trees store carbon, even when cut into a wood product. As a tree rots or is destroyed, it releases carbon. Younger trees sequester more carbon dioxide, while older trees release it when they get to a certain age. This is why we need a well-managed forest. We need to mitigate the risk of trees being destroyed from bush fires by cutting the red tape and allowing cool burns in the correct conditions. This in turn will reduce rot, promote growth and protect the loss of our forests and our forest fauna.

We need to learn from the 19/20 fires as we were prohibited from the harvesting of the burnt forests which could have been salvaged which would have encouraged new growth. In parts of our current operation there are examples of where this would have been beneficial.

Thankyou for taking the time to read my submission. I look forward to discussing these points if I am afforded the opportunity to do so.

Kirsty Parker [REDACTED]