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Organisation: *Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society Inc.*

Location: *New South Wales*

Supporting materials uploaded: *Attached overleaf*

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

Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society has monitored research on Australia's bat fauna, particularly the grey-headed flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*, since the 1980s. On behalf of our members, we urge the government to cease the logging of native forests in NSW State Forests. This appeal is grounded in significant concerns regarding the economic, ecological, and social costs of continued native forest logging.

Our members seek an end to the logging of native forests in NSW State Forests because it is operating at a loss and is an unacceptable cost to the taxpayer.

For example, in the years between Financial Year 2009 and 2014, the Softwood Plantations Division of NSW State Forests cross-subsidised loss-making native forestry logging to the order of \$79m. This study was based on publicly available information at the time.

<https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/money-doesnt-grow-on-trees/>

Polling Research on Ending native forest logging across Australia was undertaken on April 9, 2024 by the Australia Institute showed that there is strong support for this proposition.

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* Seven in 10 Australians (69%) support an end to native forest logging on public land across Australia, including 37% who strongly support an end.

* Only one in five (19%) oppose an end to native forest logging across Australia.

* There is majority support for ending native forest logging across Australia in Western Australia (71%), NSW (70%), Victoria (66%) and Queensland (68%).

* There is majority support for ending native forest logging on public land across Australia from all major voting intentions, with highest level of support from Labor voters (79%), followed by Greens voters (76%), Coalition voters (62%), One Nation voters (61%) and Independent/Other voters (57%).

Logging of native forests no longer has the social licence it once had, therefore, it is time to end this destructive practice.

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

Ecological Concerns and the Grey-Headed Flying-Fox:

The grey-headed flying-fox, a threatened species listed as Vulnerable under the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, plays a crucial role in seed dispersal and pollination for many indigenous tree species. This species requires a mosaic of flowering trees for food which include native tree species such as blackbutt *Eucalyptus pilularis* and spotted gum *Corymbia maculata*. The incremental removal of these resources due to native forest logging has put severe pressure on the grey-headed flying-fox population. Grey-headed flying-foxes are panmictic, that is, genetically they are one population. The NSW Scientific Committee's Final Determination

highlights habitat loss as the primary threat to grey-headed flying-foxes, impacting both their food sources and roosting areas.

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/nsw-threatened-species-scientific-committee/determinations/final-determinations/2000-2003/grey-headed-flying-fox-pteropus-poliocephalus-vulnerable-species-listing>

Logging activities continue to reduce essential diet species for these animals, and the prolonged recovery period for these areas further jeopardizes the potential for recovery of their population.

Impacts on Other Threatened Species:

The Society is also concerned about the impact of native forest logging in State Forests because of its impacts on other threatened species such as forest owls, gliders and many species of microbats. Each coup that is felled removes habitat for the animals which lived in it. They cannot move 'next door' because those forest habitats are already occupied. Instead, they die. Birds such as the swift parrot *Lathamus discolor* and the regent honeyeater *Anthochaera Phrygia* are nomads, like flying-foxes, which are nectar feeders and move about the forests to feed on blossoming trees. Their populations have already severely declined and continued logging will further endanger these populations, leading to irreversible biodiversity losses in NSW State Forests. Native forest logging cannot be considered a sustainable harvest and therefore should be terminated.

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

Our Society supports the harvesting of timber both hardwood and softwood from plantations. A reassessment of the quantities and types of timber required needs to be undertaken in view of changes in technology eg. mining methods are changing; coal mining will be phased out so timber supports will not be needed. Electricity poles are being made of composite materials not timber.

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

We support the continuation of existing softwood plantations, such as radiata pine, for construction timber production. These plantations provide a sustainable source of timber without the adverse impacts on biodiversity associated with native forest logging. Additionally, the Society endorses the responsible harvesting of hardwood timber from private land, provided that the trees are planted on already cleared farmland. No further native vegetation should be cleared for timber production on private land. Ending native forest logging will enable native tree plantations on private land to be more profitable by ending this subsidised competition in the market.

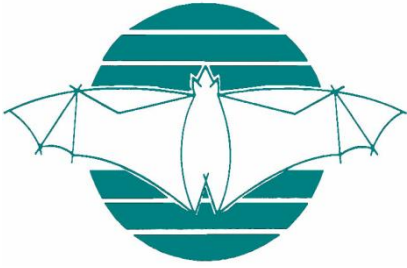
Topic 5. The role of State Forests in maximising the delivery of a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes and options for diverse management, including Aboriginal forest management models

The Society recommends that NSW State Forests containing native vegetation be transferred to conservation management. Such areas should be managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. By discontinuing native forest logging, the existing grants and avoided losses could provide funding for ongoing management by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. Furthermore, the impact on jobs is likely to be minimal, as approximately only 600 people are directly employed in the native forestry industry in NSW, less than 0.1% of the total workforce. When state forests were previously transferred to national parks management, people employed in the logging industry gained employment with the National Parks and Wildlife Service or in regional tourism industries. Although NSW State Forests have provided some social benefits

such as camping sites, walking tracks and some signage about ecology, these social benefits would be more effectively provided by the National Park and Wildlife Service.

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

It is clear to our members that the native forests currently under NSW State Forest management would be better managed for their biodiversity benefits and to store carbon. Harvested coups are currently burned to stimulate regeneration of a narrow range of plant species. This results in the release of greenhouse gases and degradation of biodiversity values. Instead, ending native forest logging can enable recovery of these forests. Research has shown that undisturbed forests store more carbon, protect water catchments and are resilient to fires. It is urgent to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to reduce global heating because mass mortalities of flying-foxes are occurring more frequently in summers that reach extremely hot temperatures. For a species which has only one pup per year, such mass deaths, especially of the young, contributes to their declining population. Mo M. et al (2021) Estimating flying-fox mortality associated with abandonments of pups and extreme heat events during the austral summer of 2019â€“20 Pacific Conservation Biology <https://doi.org/10.1071/PC21003>



Submission to the NSW Independent Forestry Panel

10th October 2024

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By discontinuing native forest logging, the existing grants and avoided losses could provide funding for ongoing management by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Furthermore, the impact on jobs is likely to be minimal, as approximately only 600 people are directly employed in the native forestry industry in NSW, less than 0.1% of the total workforce.

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Conclusion

Therefore, ending native forest logging will have economic, social and biodiversity benefits.

