

LULU BALBI

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

Native forest logging is not sustainable and the estimations by the Forestry Corporation of the amount of harvestable timber are consistently over estimated.

Logging of native forests reduces biomass and carbon storage, and removing mature trees takes away valuable food sources and hollow bearing trees, while hundreds species in NSW rely on these hollows for dens and nests.

Native forest logging increases fire threat and intensity, with the 2019-2020 bushfire season being one of the worst NSW has ever faced. It also increases erosion and water way pollution, and the penetration of weeds and other invasive species.

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

Native forests provide recreation and improved health outcomes to both locals and visitors and are a source of community pride, connection to place and are a driver of tourism.

Mature and unlogged native forests are critical for pollinators and play a key role in pollination across the landscape. Bees are already facing catastrophic colony collapse globally , this is only going to make matters worse.

There are 269 nationally listed threatened species in NSW and native forest logging compromises many ecosystems and habitats that are essential for their survival. There are inadequate protections in place when native forest logging is allowed, as shown by the recently discovered deceased greater glider in Tallaganda.

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

Approximately 50% of the logs taken from native forests in 2023 were turned into woodchips and exported. This is absolutely staggering. How is it possible that woodchips are being valued more highly than living native forests?

Native forest logging is also being subsidised by public coin. Why are we subsidising an unprofitable logging industry in the first place, let alone at the expense of our incredibly precious and critical native forests?

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

The market and demand for native forests is declining rapidly, the recent example of Essential Energy moving away from power poles harvested from native forests is just one example.

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

Subsidising the logging of public native forests by the Forestry Corporation is non-competitive and distorts the market away from the more profitable softwood plantation industry. Plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production.

High-end and luxury native hardwood products should only be selectively harvested on private land and under strict conditions.

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

Why are the people of NSW paying millions of dollars to destroy the biodiversity of our own state and critical habitat for threatened species? The native forest hardwood division of the Forestry Corporation operates at a loss that runs into tens of millions of dollars, at the expense of the NSW public. It also additionally receives tens of millions of dollars in regular equity injections. This is absolutely outrageous and is not common public knowledge.

Public native forests have a much higher economic value when they are allowed to function naturally and without logging, they have real and tangible benefits to the entire ecology and economy of NSW, as opposed to just the pockets of the Forestry Corporation.

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

Moreover, First Nations Ranger Programs have been hugely successful at managing the recovery and health of native forests. Programs like the Githabul Rangers have shown how First Nations knowledge and management can restore the natural and critical function of forests in the landscape.

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

Ending native forest logging will allow previously logged forests to regain lost carbon and make a significant contribution to meeting our emissions targets at a time when we're struggling to meet these targets, native forest logging in NSW is estimated to release 3.6 million tonnes of carbon every year and ending it would be equivalent to removing 840,000 cars from the roads per year. Climate change is driving increased risks for forest health and continued logging in native forests is exacerbating that risk. Forests that have not been logged are more resilient to the changing climate and catastrophic fires that are occurring as a consequence, such as the 2019-2020 NSW bushfires.