

# Public submission

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**Supporting materials uploaded:** *Attached overleaf*

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Forestry Industry Action Plan

To whom it may concern,

I am a resident of the South Coast region and am writing to convey my desire for NSW to transition out of native forest logging.

The Australian Government has legislated greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets of 43% (from 2005 levels) by 2030, and net zero by 2050 (DCCEEW, 2023). I am very concerned that Australia will not be successful in achieving these targets, and believe that native forest logging is an unnecessary contributor to Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.

Both Victoria and Western Australia have pledged their intention to cease native forest logging. I would hope to see NSW as an environmental leader within Australia. Instead, the state produces the second most native forest logs in the country and has been ranked worst in Australia at combating deforestation (Forbes & Parmeter, 2023).

Researchers from ANU and Griffith University are calling for an immediate cessation of native forest logging, having determined that for the Australian Government to meet its legislated greenhouse gas emissions reduction, emissions should be cut by 15.3 megatons per year (ANU, 2023). This number roughly equates to the annual emissions created through native forest logging. More specifically, ceasing native forest logging in southern NSW could produce a net benefit of approximately \$60 million, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 1 million tonnes per year from 2022-2041 (Cormack & O'Malley, 2022).

Following the well documented devastation of the 2019-2020 bushfires, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has stated that Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW) has not allowed sufficient time for the proper recovery of our native forests, nor for a complete understanding of the fires' consequences on our ecosystems. The Coastal Integrated Forestry Operation Approval (CIFOA) did not provide adequate legal framework for the EPA to appropriately manage timber harvest following the fires and Forestry Corporation NSW has been allowed to harvest in a 'business as usual' manner, adhering to additional EPA protection measures on a voluntary basis only (EPA, 2023). In addition to the strain placed on our ecosystems by logging forests recovering from bushfire, FCNSW has received two 'cease work' orders on the grounds of non-compliance for the protection of endangered species within the past few months in our south coast region alone.

It is also well documented that logged forests face an increased risk of bushfire in the years following harvest (Hutchins, 2021). In the wake of an historic fire season, and with the ever increasing risks associated with a changing climate, now would seem a prudent time for the state to transition out of the native forest logging industry. My home, business and property were directly impacted by the Currowan fire in 2019/20, and as I watch logging trucks pass by on their way into Yadboro, Brooman and Flat Rock State Forests each day, I am alarmed to know that logging is increasing bushfire risk in my area.

The native forest logging industry is a subsidised industry, in which the state owned enterprise FCNSW posted a 20 million dollar loss in the 2020-2021 year (Cormack & O'Malley, 2022). The Nature Conservation Council (NCC), cite independent studies in their claim that 91% of Australia's timber materials are currently being sourced from existing plantations, while 95% of native forest logs do not become beautiful hardwood features, but are instead destined to be chipped. I find the thought of our beautiful native forests being cleared for garden mulch at a loss of 20 million taxpayer dollars per year abhorrent and would expect that the state give much better consideration to the effective management of our resources and heritage.

In my opinion, this begs the question: If the majority of NSW timber materials are currently sourced from plantation, most native hardwood harvested is bound for the chipper, and the taxpayer funded organisation which is completing the works is making a multi-million dollar loss each year, then why is NSW continuing to pursue this method of production? How can a

subsidised industry be economically sustainable, regardless of its issues of environmental sustainability?

Instead of harvesting native forest, at great cost to taxpayers, a detriment to emissions targets, ecology and ecosystem service value, why not redirect taxpayer money for a fair transition toward a plantation oriented future? In this system, marginalised lands could be reforested for the purpose of being cyclically harvested. The industry would provide timber and jobs, while allowing for some natural carbon sequestration without the significant loss to biodiversity which occurs each time a native forest is felled (Morton, 2023). Our unique, invaluable forests can remain intact, our timber industry can continue to provide jobs and materials, and we can reduce the total carbon cost of the timber industry by adding net biomass to the system, rather than reducing it.

Lastly, I understand that the NSW government has among its goals, a plan to support the recovery of our koala population, including by commissioning the new Greater Koala National Park. This is a commendable goal and one to be proud of, however I have to wonder why FCNSW is allowed to continue logging within the area of the proposed park prior to its establishment. Surely lands which are to be set aside for conservation should not first be degraded by logging?

Thank you for taking the time to consider this letter. I am an expecting father, and want nothing in this world more than for my children to be given the chance to live in a beautiful, plentiful, equitable, stable and safe world. We need our government's support in this. We need our government to prioritise the protection and rehabilitation of our wild places, our carbon sinks, our country's heart, lungs and circulatory system. I hope for your support and look forward to hearing how NSW plans to better sustain its nature, heritage and future.

Warm regards,  
Mackenzie Roth



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