

MADDISON AUSTEN

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

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Imagine if 88% of state owned forest was reserved from logging, leaving only 12% available for timber production. Imagine if only 0.2% of the states publicly owned forest was impacted by timber harvesting each year, but not clear felling, selective harvesting only. Beyond that, no old growth logging, not mangrove or riparian areas and definitely no rainforests. Wait there's more.. Imagine rules, regulations, comprehensive mapping of the harvest areas, specialised road construction and buffer areas for trees with hollows, nectar and food trees and trees with evidence of certain animals e.g. koalas and gliders. AND a government body that checks to be sure these rules are adhered to.

What a utopia.

Actually, this is the reality of native timber harvesting in State Forest in NSW

NSW Government. (n.d.). NSW forest extent interactive reports. Retrieved from Department of Primary Industries: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forestry/science/forest-resources/nsw-forest-area-reports>

Forestry Corporation. (2023). Sustainability Reports. Retrieved from Forestry Corporation: <https://www.forestrycorporation.com.au/about/pubs/corporate/sustainability-reports> (Five year average 2018-2019 to 2022-2023).

<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry>

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

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The consensus is reserving forests in national parks will save the environment. In reality, the increase in national park reserves and the listing of species as threatened have followed the same trajectory. If national parks were the answer, threatened species should be decreasing with the development of national parks.

NSW Environment Protection Authority. (2021). NSW State of the Environment 2021. Parramatta: NSW Environment Protection Authority

Australian Government. (2022). Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database (CAPAD) 2022 . Retrieved from Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water: <https://www.dccew.gov.au/environment/land/nrs/science/capad/2022>

Locking forests in reserve is not the answer, unmanaged reserves don't protect native species. Conversely the state's reserve system was more vulnerable to fire. The 2019 fires devastate the state, the best performer in terms of canopy loss was private native forest, 6%; the poorest? National parks, 19% canopy cover loss.

The WWF surveyed the devastation in the north east of the state, they reported Koala survival was five times more likely in areas where forest canopies were unburnt/partially burnt, compared to fully burnt canopies.

National parks are not the forest and biodiversity protection haven they are lorded to be.

NSW Government. (2022). Insights for NSW forest outcomes and management. Sydney: Natural Resources Commission.

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Phillips, S., Wallis, K., & Lane, A. (2021). Quantifying the impacts of bushfire on populations of wild koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*): Insights from the 2019/20 fire season. *Ecological Management & Restoration*, 22(1), 80-88

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

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Hardwood timber and processing is valued at \$2.9 billion to the states economy each year and employs 8900 people.

Ernst & Young. (2023). Economic Contribution Study of the NSW hardwood timber industry. North East NSW Forestry Hub

Australia is a net importer of timber. Even if all exporting was stopped and the product was used locally, there would still be a product shortfall to the value of just over \$4 million.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests/forest-economics/forest-wood-products-statistics>

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

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The plantations that we have are at capacity in the market in terms of the product they can supply. The reality is that we don't have enough plantations, and the plantation estate is stagnant in terms of establishment. Across Australia, only 4,500 ha of new plantations were established in 2022/23, of that only 700ha was hardwood; and not necessarily hardwood for sawn timber production.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests/forest-economics/forest-wood-products-statistics>

Government policy has aimed to attract investment in plantations, particularly on private land, without considering the wants of the landholder.

<https://nenswforestryhub.com.au/news-reports/reports/report/9-landholder-barriers-and-incentives-to-timber-production>

The economics of planting hardwood plantations for timber production don't stack up. The lack of management of NSW state owned plantations to save the immediate cost of silviculture has cost the government the opportunity to lead by example and have examples of healthy, well managed plantations in the landscape. The lack of faith in the validity of plantations has also been exacerbated by the MIS debacle.

<https://nenswforestryhub.com.au/news-reports/reports/report/8-evaluation-of-the-financial-performance-of-existing-hardwood-plantations>

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### **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**

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Native forest outside of the reserve system offer the same environmental outcomes as forests in the reserve. Rightfully so, the forests of greatest environmental significance, or representing the range of forest ecotypes should be in the reserve system. But the creation of further reserve doesn't protect species and doesn't protect the forest from fire (see references offered earlier). The economic and social benefits offered by state forests can't be offered by forests in the reserve system, as determined by state policies for different tenure management. Thus closing state forest would negate, not maximise any economic value from timber or most other finance generating industry conducted in state forests. Many social outcomes through loss of access for recreation would also be lost e.g. anything with animals (equestrian, dogs), mountain biking, free camping, fossicking to name a few.

**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**

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The suggestion that closing state forests to production would maximise the protection of native species, mitigate global warming and remove fire from the landscape comes from members of the public who have limited to no understanding on the reserve system, forest management or fire ecology.

Suggestions that replacing renewable timber products with alternatives made from finite materials that must be extracted from the earth, highly modified to create a product at a massive carbon cost, is not renewable and often not recycled or recyclable is ludicrous.

The short sightedness of the idea our timber needs would magically be met without importing timber from overseas when we are already a net importer of timber products is also unbelievable. Sawn timber products, those traditionally sourced from native forest will be imported from the indo-pacific, not a region renowned for their environmental impact laws. Who likes orangutangs anyway?

The major opportunity to realise the maximum role of our productive state forests for environmental outcomes is to commit to publicising the resources, time and effort that goes into managing a harvest event; the research conducted by forestry; the environmental and economic benefits of harvesting; the actual area of forest that is managed for harvest annually, and the protections for that forest. Let Forestry Corp employees address the media and provide rebuttal for the false statements and information perpetuated in the media. Provide information to the public about the different uses of National Parks and state forests.

Many submissions are screaming what about the next generation?! and I agree, don't lump them with the environmental disaster that would be locking up a viable managed resource because the loud minority don't understand forest management.