

# Public submission

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**Organisation:** *N/A*

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**Location:** *New South Wales*

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

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## Your submission

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

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I have no confidence that our public forests can be managed sustainably in the near future. They are not managed sustainably now, from any point of view. Historically the sustained yield estimates have been grossly inflated. Currently actual yield is 61% of so called sustained yield. But it is even worse than that since the impact of the 2019/20 bushfires on the forests has not been accounted for. The timber industry has cut itself out of business. The takeover of jobs by machines like the monster “Harvester” which grabs, chainsaws, swings around and stacks a tree in a minute might well be safer for humans but the consequences are much more far reaching. The rapacious cutting by this machine is at a rate at least five times faster than a human logger. The change of size limits of extractable trees in 2018 in conjunction with such machinery has led to increased intensity of logging. This cannot be sustained. We are currently seeing a smash and grab operation, It is a get it while you can approach, the end of the industry is nigh. The workers can see this. It would be a win win win trajectory to acknowledge that we need to end native forest logging now. It would be economically responsible, ecologically wise, climate impact cautious and help protect biodiversity. The modelling of the contraction of habitat on our rapidly heating planet such as presented in the [Barrington to Hawkesbury Climate Corridors Report \(2022\)](#) evidences the vital role our public forests must play to enable survival of species. Any consideration of the future must use the lense of the radical impacts of climate change.

The conversion of the Forestry Commission to Forestry Corporation highlights the necessity to also consider the operation and sustainability in fiscal terms. The timber industry does not make money. In 2023 it required the subsidy of \$15million from the taxpayers. A state owned corporation is required to be competitive. For several years it has operated in the red. Moreover, sustainability presumably also needs to be considered in terms of the timber resource! Once upon a time State Forests even promulgated the concept of Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management. Lip service was being paid to the recognition that sustainable timber production is dependent on viable ecosystem function at the catchment scale. But, in parallel with the Federal Government recognition of the current position that the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development have not been able to be upheld over the past five decades, that the crying need now is for environmental reparation or a true Nature Positive Plan, State Government has a responsibility to act in the public interest and acknowledge the many other values of our forests. They are worth more standing. The soil stability and slow release of water from mature forest with integrity, the carbon NOT emitted from logging PLUS the greater amount of carbon captured and held by larger diameter old trees (one tree of 150cm dboh is equivalent 724 trees of 10cm dboh !!) and the irreplaceable habitat value of minimally disturbed forests is incontrovertible.

The consequences of landuse decision making over the past two hundred and fifty years in NSW have been grave for biodiversity and the environment. We must turn the tables around. Native forest logging is not sustainable. We have broken the web of life. I implore the Panel to accept responsibility for accelerating the transition of the timber industry to plantation forestry because, for far too long, we have failed to accept responsibility for the extinction crisis we have precipitated. There also needs to be an immediate interim moratorium on logging in forests supporting healthy breeding populations of Koalas and Greater Gliders.

The only way to redress the balance is for timber supply to be from plantations, our historical mistakes are too great to sustain native forest logging.

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

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Further to Section 1, the forests are worth more standing, but the environmental values of the forest estate cannot be appropriately monetised. Our increasingly uncertain future of a changed climate with more extreme weather events more frequently means the integrity of our forest ecosystems are priceless. The negative impacts of droughts, fires, winds and floods are all ameliorated by minimally disturbed forests and the converse is also true. For instance, regrowth forest transpires more water to the atmosphere at a greater rate; warmer air holds more moisture; wind currents are increasingly unpredictable.

The impact of loss of habitat for native species through logging, grazing, fire now exacerbated by climate change is leading to extinctions of regional populations of threatened species, such as the Koala and Greater Glider. This leads to extinction of the species. We are diminished as a people if we allow this to happen.

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

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I understand that there are many alternatives to timber products already in use in the NSW construction industry. Poles are more fire resistant when made out of fibreglass composites and are already in use by power companies.

## **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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Plantation timber, both softwood and hardwood, is able to be the basis of the ongoing timber supply needs. It is already the source of over 90% of Australia's log production. Further to section 3, innovation is the key to our future.

## **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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As intimated below, State Forests, the public service body that has the responsibility for managing this public land, does not have public confidence. 'State Forests' is more the dog's body of the timber industry. This is, of course, an obvious consequences of vested interests. It was presumably unrealistic to expect anything different.

## **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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I am gravely concerned that biodiversity credits and offsetting in NSW have failed to shift the trajectory of the biodiversity crisis. More indigenous species have been recognised as threatened since the inception of the scheme. Its construction was fatally flawed. There should have been No GO /red flags, for example offsetting of destruction of critically endangered ecosystems is just not possible.

State Forests have been prosecuted many times for failing to comply with the laws protecting biodiversity. The State Forests officers simply see themselves as timber producers. The spirit of the regulations to mitigate the impact of the operations is not respected, and perhaps is not even understood.

I am also concerned that any attempt to establish a carbon market will be perverted and corrupted as has occurred globally to date.

