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

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I believe native forest logging is unsustainable, current clear felling practices decimate native forests- it is devastating to witness first hand and hidden from the general public both physically (logged coupes are never in clear site of major roads but hidden behind a thin veil of trees) and much worse deceitful greenwashing by politicians and the forestry industry on outdated practices no longer fit for purpose. NSW's native forest estate is on a trajectory to collapse, native forests are already severely overcut by an industry that does not follow best practice guidelines- combine this with the inevitable extreme fire events- now a world wide phenomenon in addition to climate change our native forest ecosystems will never recover to support a viable logging industry. Estimations by the Forestry Corporation of the amount of harvestable timber are consistently over estimated and since 2010 public native forests yields have declined by 40%. Despite this the forestry industry in 2018 removed protection for mature trees and intensified logging of native forests- I cannot understand the rationale for this- vested interests I assume the prime motivator of this ill conceived decision.

The government I believe has forgotten the devastating impacts of the bushfires that ravaged eastern Australia from October 2019 to February 2020- 7 percent of the state was on fire- many forests destroyed and massive biodiversity loss.

I suggest the following report commissioned by the state of NSW Department of DPIE in 2021- "NSW Wildlife and Conservation Bushfire Recovery: Supplement A- Assessing the Impact of Bushfires on Wildlife and Conservation" be compulsory Continuous Professional Education for all elected NSW politicians especially the Premier and the Environment Minister in addition to all those employed in the Forestry Industry. On page 8 of that report the habitat identified as CRITICAL to the recovering endangered species populations impacted by the fires include: tree hollows, understory and mid storey vegetation, Eucalypt canopy and forest floor- that is INTACT native forests.

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/Fire/nsw-wildlife-and-conservation-bushfire-recovery-supplement-a-assessing-impact-200478.pdf>

The report also identified the two key threatening processes that will significantly impact the survival and reoccupation of the burnt forests is the loss of loss of hollow bearing trees and the removal of dead wood and dead trees.

Current clear felling practices of native forests removes mature hollow bearing trees, reduces biomass removing valuable food sources for threatened species. There is 174 species in NSW that rely on hollows for dens and nests, logging reduces the number of hollows that will be created in native forests- it appears the governments that manage our public native forest estate ignore their own research- native forest logging has not been viable for long time and should have ceased years ago.

In addition intact forests are important health measures for all Australians. Native forest logging reduces the function and health of waterways, including streams and rivers- our healthy water supply depends on intact forests.

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In addition biodiversity loss is the biggest environmental driver of infectious disease outbreaks through out the world which is making them more dangerous and widespread. World wide new infectious diseases are on the rise and they often originate in displaced wildlife when they come in close contact with humans- keeping native forests in tact is vitally important in mitigating this risk.

Australia should be a leader in this space.

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

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Healthy and unlogged forests are critical to the whole environment for both First Nations and non-First Nations culture and identity. Consider the following points:

Healthy mature native forests, generate rainfall which cool the landscape and cleanses the air- vital to our sustainability on this planet.

There are 150 threatened species in NSW which are directly impacted by logging native forests- this is the vital habitat they need to survive.

Mature and unlogged native forests are critical for pollinators and play a key role in pollination across the landscape, both inside and outside of forests- this is vitally important for agricultural crop- humanity's food source

Native forests provide recreation and improved health outcomes to locals and visitors alike and are a source of community pride and connection to place. So many beautiful people in communities across all of NSW fighting to protect their local native forests- their pleas ignored by the government. They are often vilified, insulted and occasionally assaulted by Forestry Industry workers. Local Police are also impacted by the tensions Native Forest logging evoke- restrained by recent hastily introduced, politically motivated, draconian anti- protest laws, outdated and not fit for purpose legislation and outdated industry RFAs that are devoid of meaningful environment and biodiversity preservation strategies. This current situation in these communities is disgraceful and is the direct result of poor public policy in not calling for the end of native forest logging. It is my understanding forests in NSW hold significant cultural and spiritual value for First Nations people. First Nations communities have ongoing connection to native forests and forest landscapes are an integral part of cultural practice and knowledge.

I find it very distressing that First Nations are ignored and not consulted. In July 2023 for example it was reported in the National Indigenous Times Gumbaynggirr people of Coffs Harbour region were physically removed from sacred land in Newry State Forest

Gumbaynggirr Senior Elders reported harvesters, bulldozers and skidders destroying their sacred men's sites and were physically handled and forced off the site, while the NSW Fire Brigade extinguished a sacred fire.

The Newry State Forest, now industrially logged was home to many endangered native animals including koalas and possum gliders- totem animals to the Gumbaynggirr people.

The Newry State Forest was also a core part of the proposed Great Koala National Park and was essential to the survival of Koalas across the coast and hinterland of the Bellinger and Nambucca Valleys. The values of Newry to the Gumbaynggirr people was precious, priceless and absolutely irreplaceable- the bombastic actions of NSW government sanctioned Forestry Corp was deplorable.

The article above can be found at: <https://nit.com.au/31-07-2023/7001/gumbaynggirr-elders-physically-removed-from-sacred-land-in-newry-state-forest>

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

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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

It is ridiculous the logs taken from native forests in 2023 were turned into woodchip and exported. Hardwood logs taken from plantations made up 8.5 million cubic metres, and just 8% of these logs were saw and veneer logs. 87% of hardwood plantation logs were exported as wood chips

Hardwood sourced from native forests or plantations are no longer necessary for any of the uses identified in this section. Sawn and treated softwood logs and composite timber products made from softwoods can substitute for all current uses for native forest and plantation hardwoods. 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. Recycling of old hard wood furniture and timbers in existing old homes that are being destroyed should also be protected from being dumped in landfills. Why destroy critically important native forest habitat while simultaneously dumping precious old hardwood. The NSW government should support local government initiatives and legislate appropriate recycling laws to save and reuse already extracted hardwood timber.

### **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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Given plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production. Common sense dictates higher proportion of harvested logs from plantations should be prioritised as saw and veneer logs, rather than exporting them as wood chips.

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

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

The strict recycling of all hardwood Timbers and furniture to prevent them from being thrown into landfill should also be encouraged.

### **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 forests that are not logged have real and tangible benefits to the entire ecology and economy of NSW

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.

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

The people of NSW deserve better management and should not be paying millions of dollars to destroy the biodiversity of our own state and critical habitat for threatened species.

Public native forests have a much higher economic value when they are allowed to function naturally and without logging

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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**

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Native forest logging in NSW is estimated to release 3.6 million tonnes of carbon every year. Ending native forest logging would be the equivalent to removing 840 thousand cars from the roads per year

Logging in a native forest reduces the amount of stored carbon by more than half of the original value.

Ending native forest logging will allow previously logged forests to regain lost carbon and make a significant contribution to meeting our emissions targets.

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.

Given these important points above- since retiring from nursing I have actively engaged in citizen science initiatives both in NSW and Tasmania through NGOs such as The Wilderness Society, NSW Climate Council and BBF. I've ventured into active coupes to measure the girths of mature old trees to record them in Forestry portals. Given my age I find this necessary and important work difficult.

I was completely naive as I believe the general public still is, assuming proper monitoring and surveillance was being undertaken by the NSW government owned Forestry Corp. I am very angry the young citizen scientists burdened with leading me through the forest to do this important measuring to protect the native forest from logging are vilified as Greenies. They are not being paid doing valuable work that should be the responsibility of our government owned Forestry departments. It is so very wrong and frustrating.

I have also experienced first hand the dangerous behaviour of forestry employed contractors against citizen scientists by felling trees across the roads to prevent cars from leaving coupes being measured. Thankfully the young scientist had come prepared with a handsaw. This occurs quite regularly apparently- it's a dangerous malicious act that is rarely reported.

This bullying needs to stop- it would be good for this Committee to seek and include information on the aggressive targeting of environmentalists by Government employed forestry workers in this submission. I feel although uncomfortable this is a very important conversation- personally I believe an ICAC enquiry into NSW Forestry Corp is warranted. Please take the time to familiarise a case involving an assault against an Ecologist in NSW in 2020 which was particularly brutal given the lies and deceit of the Forestry contractors and also sadly the police. I have included links below:

<https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2024/june/katherine-wilson/combative-nature#mtr>

<https://greens.org.au/nsw/news/media-release/loggers-found-guilty-assault-after-years-continued-trauma-victims>

<https://www.newsofthearea.com.au/coffs-coast-ecologist-alleges-series-of-targeted-incidents-by-forestry-corporation>

As a nurse we had strict codes of conduct and compulsory education to remain current with evidence-based principles. There were major consequences to our registration if we were not compliant. I assumed this expectation was uniform across all government departments.

## Public submission

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It is wrong local communities are required to undertake honest surveillance to report politically motivated criminal activity by the NSW government- breaches of their own legislation that are then tirelessly fought in the courts by tenacious local communities and NGOs at the expense of the taxpayer. The assault and arrest of environmentalists I find particularly abhorrent. Forestry Corp is a political machine- it does not represent the long term interest and health of the Australian population. The underfunding of the EPA is woeful at protecting and making sure legislation is upheld. The situation is absurd and not adequately conveyed to voters either through the media or on government websites- there is very little transparency. The End of Native Logging is inevitable- at Forestry Corps current rate there will be no native old growth forests left. The industry is unsustainable, a financial burden to all NSW voters. After what I have read and observed over the past decade- I don't believe even this process will prevent the inevitable destruction of our remaining native forests. Our current government and the previous NSW government will continue to ignore the science and their own government initiated research and vilify and financially penalise through the current draconian anti-protest laws, community members and First Nations people for taking a stand. We deserve so much better and we need to heed our responsibility to future generations by Ending Native Forest logging TODAY and legislate to protect these precious forest estates forever from potential greed and short sightedness that we observe today.