

Public submission

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1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

Current levels of native forest logging are unsustainable and will probably contribute to the demise of iconic Australian wildlife such as the Koala and the Greater Glider. Many native animals require hollows that form in older trees and that take many, perhaps hundreds, of years to form. The clearing of these old-growth native forests leaves these animals without homes and/or protection from predation from foxes and cats that are known to move into areas after they have been cleared or burnt. Not only do these native animals lose their homes, but I have seen many news stories of koalas and other native animals being killed or maimed during the tree felling.

I have also seen evidence that recently cleared and regenerated forests (30-40 years old) are much more susceptible to wildfires than forests that have not been cleared for 300-400 years. Surely we should be doing everything we can to retain these older forests with the onset of global warming and the resultant increased fire risk.

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

As stated above, old-growth forests are extremely important for the survival of native Australian animal and plant species, many of which are threatened. Old-growth forests provide a complex inter-related web of species that rely on each other for their very survival. If you remove this complexity and allow single species to dominate, these “regenerated” forests will be barren and lifeless.

Old-growth forests also provide a number of services values by humans:

- Protecting our rivers and dams from becoming silted by rapid water runoff, improving water quality and providing fishing and tourism opportunities.
- Recreational values such as bushwalking. No bushwalker wants to walk through a recently cleared forest.
- Spiritual significance for indigenous communities.

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

Surely human needs for timber products can be supplied from plantations and I believe much of our needs are already supplied this way (as much as 90% I understand).

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

Softwood and hardwood plantations on historically cleared land should be encouraged as an alternative to native forest logging. By ceasing the logging of native forests, demand for timber

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will shift to plantations and this may encourage landholders to re-forest their historically cleared land as an additional source of income. If plantations are developed on historically cleared land the consequent carbon storage in these plantations will also have benefits in battling climate change.

There should be no logging of privately owned old-growth forests.

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

The future role of State Forests should be the protecting and restoring of public state forests, not continuing their destruction. Restoring our forests will provide many benefits such as improving our water resources and providing positive economic value through tourism and recreational opportunities. State Forests could provide positive economic benefits by creating regional job opportunities in tourism and even generate income through carbon storage projects.

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

While a growing forest will absorb carbon from the atmosphere, surely it would make sense to establish these growing forests as plantations on historically cleared land rather than releasing the carbon already stored in old-growth native forests.

Wildfires are another significant contributor to carbon in our atmosphere and I understand there is evidence that shows recently regenerated forests (30-40 yrs old) are much more susceptible to sustaining and spreading wildfires than old-growth forests.

With proper planning and management, plantation forests could be established to manage the risk of wildfires with appropriate firebreaks and prepared access to control fires.

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