

Public submission

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RE: Forest Industry Review

2782 NSW

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the FIAP review.

I wish to express my great concern regarding ongoing and often reckless accelerated indiscriminate logging in native forests, in earmarked future conservation reserves, and old growth forests is contributing heavily to species and habitat loss at such a rate, that in situ species are being pushed to likely extinction.

Old growth forests take hundreds of years to develop, if not thousands of years, and with it their interconnected ecosystems containing Australia's unique fauna and flora, in its interconnected and dependent myriad forms.

- I believe indiscriminate logging practice in native forests, any logging in old growth forests is a form of corporate environmental vandalism, which has been unchecked and out of control and will remain so until urgent action is taken to stop it. The former State Government has been negligent in its overseeing of logging industries which exploited bushland environments, and has failed us in its responsibility to protect critically endangered species and habitat for the future.

Intellectual and practical understanding, the intention of the meaning of "Rights of Nature", of "National Parks", of "Conservation Areas", of "Koala Parks" are intended to promote and protect biodiversity, ecosystems and our natural environment, to enable long term conservation, yet these terms, words of deep meaning, to ensure sustainability and longevity, are at risk of being cumulatively watered down to become tokenism, to be shallow slogans.

- *The current Government must take immediate action to end native forest logging.*
- Industries such as Forest Corporation NSW, a Government Department, has been pushing ahead and logging into areas without proper assessment. After years of unrestrained logging and its impact, *they have ignored their own core responsibilities, to thoroughly assess for the presence of critically threatened species such as the Greater Glider and the Koala.*
- Forest Corporation NSW have breached identified future reserves, and contributed heavily to losses of these unique species. Additionally I believe continued logging in native forests and bushland will lead to increased fire risk, and weed infestation in the disturbed sites which forces further risk on to depleted habitat resources. The 2019 / 20 fires have made this situation urgent and with likely future climate change driven fires, urgent action must be taken to protect dwindling pockets of threatened species.

The removal of old growth forests, the last safe harbour for at risk species *whose natural habitat is old growth forests*, who are forest dependent species, is the primary cause of extinction of many in situ species and ecosystems.

Wilderness Australia states "With the process to create a Great Koala National Park across parts of the mid-north coast underway, Forestry Corporation NSW has been intensively targeting some of the most critical Koala habitat remaining in Australia. Over 18,800 hectares of core koala habitat are currently being logged or are scheduled for logging within the Great Koala National Park assessment area. This works out to be around three times more logging operations per hectare than the remainder of NSW".

This accelerated unauthorised, unofficial rate of logging is symptomatic of an out of touch institution who defies public expectation and undermines other Departmental attempts to bring meaningful conservation to the forefront of Government environmental policy.

Wilderness Australia surveys estimate “over 11,000 hectares of Greater Glider refugia is currently being logged or is scheduled for logging in the near future.

Four key examples of this targeting are Tallaganda, Badja, Styx River and Tuggolo State Forests. Community surveys over the last 12 months have found a total of 571 Greater Gliders and 154 den trees using on-ground spotlighting and thermal drone surveys. These surveys are ongoing, and indicate that there are high densities of greater gliders within these areas. But if logging continues, many of these Greater Gliders will be killed”.

- Legislation is currently failing native forests and their ecosystems, and there is no effective accountability, or oversight to restrain improper practises of the logging industry.
- *I call on the FIAP Review to recommend an immediate stop, a moratorium on logging in all native bushland forests, in all old growth forests in NSW.*
- *I call on the NSW Government to establish an immediate change of policy to action an urgent and immediate uptake of sustainable plantation logging, as the sole source of timber felling.*

This industry transition is already underway, with plantation-based industry supplying around 90% of Australia’s timber needs being met by current plantations.

“The remaining 10% can easily be satisfied by stopping the export of unprocessed plantation wood and improving the domestic management of existing plantations” (Wilderness Australia).

- *It is in the interests of the Logging Industry to move to sustainable logging, to protect its revenue earnings and to practise a sustainable plantation business model of operations, which prompts a viable business model of operations for the future.*
- *Its current method of operation is depleting its sources of old growth timber, a fast diminishing finite resource, propelling them to breach guidelines to log in restricted areas, maintaining an unsustainable “exploitative business model”. Old growth timber forests will not be recovered in many lifetimes ahead of us, if ever.*
- *The value of old growth forest trees, and native bushland cannot be measured solely as felled timber. Native forests have a primary role in carbon storage, the water cycle, providing critical habitat, reducing fire risk, vital to all interconnected indigenous forms of fauna and flora.*
- *Old growth forests have a greater infinite value as a significant part of wider ecosystems and of maintaining the intact natural order of Australia’s bushland environment, far greater value for the future, than felled timber.*
There are dire implications if unrestrained native forest timber felling continues to impact and degrade the environment, in this time of climate change and catastrophic losses of habitat.
- *The construction industry has modernised its use of resources and implements new building techniques which do not need to rely on old growth forest timbers or native species. Old growth timber may have been a lucrative part of the timber industry business model, but it is no longer an essential timber, and one which the construction industry will increasingly avoid on ethical grounds, with its relationship to extinction of species.*

Government failures to establish legislative guidelines which ensure the protections of forests and its associated fauna and flora ecosystems; failure to direct the logging industry to stop logging in old growth forests; failure to mandate an immediate uptake of the sustainable plantation model; failure in NSW to install better practise into the NSW logging industry; is contributing cumulatively to destabilise NSW's natural ecosystems which are already threatened by climate change and other industries, other bad actors who refuse to acknowledge the impact they have on the environment.

Current legislative processes do not withstand exploitative corporations who find loopholes or simply ignore the responsibilities outlined in legislation, who ignore habitat and fauna and flora values, who plunder ecosystems in order to maximise their profits. This is short term thinking without regard for the future of Australia's unique and at risk fauna and flora.

- The current Australian native forest logging business model is an "Exploitative business model" which relies on degrading and razing entire areas of forests, an exploitative short term mode of operation which leaves nothing for the future and leaves a legacy of serious non reversible collateral damage with its impact on fauna and flora.
- Its mode of operation is tied to capital wealth gain, commercial profits at the expense and demise of the sites it exploits. It is not sustainable, and is by its own actions and operational practises, a clearly defined unsustainable business model.

The profits and unsustainable mode of operation of Forest Corporation NSW, and similar logging industries, are trading on huge costs to the Governments reputation, the diminishing of the publics faith and expectations that Government will act to save threatened species in time. Decision makers appear to be slow to react, indifferent to extinction rates, and to the sustainability of natural environments for the future.

The Government's long standing history of tacit support for native forest logging, is demonstrated via its codependent relationship with loggings economic gains, its inability to stop illegal logging, when illegal logging has been exposed. Forest Corporation NSW is a Government Department operating under its own management hierarchy, indicating transparent evidence of failures of the NSW Government to control Forest Corporation NSW, in order to protect old growth native forests and their threatened species.

Forest Corporation NSW activities, highlight Government failures to end all statewide illegal, unnecessary and destructive plundering of native forest logging in NSW. It could be seen unfortunately, as an example of apparent Government sanctioned environmental vandalism.

I heard someone say recently "we are not the custodians of the earth, the earth is the custodian of us" This is an indisputably healthy, sane view of the earth and without that understanding, our dependance on it for survival will always be plagued and threatened by our careless exploitative relationship with it. We should work together as caring conservationists with the natural environment, in a mutual need to survive, to maintain and enable the earths continuing survival as safe habitat for all of earths fauna and flora, including the human species.

The push for economic profits is an out of control dominating factor at the expense of the natural environment. In this time of global climate change, of catastrophic species extinction, rates, of bushfires and extreme catastrophic change, can we justify invading what we have left, as if we are still colonialists, lacking knowledge and understanding of our actions?

"An opportunity exists now for State Forests to deliver and maximise a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes and options for diverse management, including Aboriginal forest management models. Transitioning 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" (Wilderness Australia).

“Healthy forests are essential for reducing the impacts of climate change like wildfires and drought. By stopping logging, forests can play a large role in mitigating climate risks and supporting opportunities in carbon markets”(Wilderness Australia).

- I fully support an immediate end to native forest logging and a future industry based on sustainable plantations;
Native forest logging is driving the endangered koala and greater glider to extinction. An immediate logging moratorium should be placed over core greater glider and koala habitat while the FIAP process is underway.
- I respectfully ask for an immediate end to native forest logging in NSW which will protect more than a million hectares of native forests, wilderness areas and core endangered species habitat.