

NAME REDACTED

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

Logging in our native forests is unsustainable and should be ended immediately. This industry is hugely subsidized by the taxpayer at a level of many millions of dollars every year. Mature trees are being sold by Forestry Corporation for an average of \$2 per tree, and these trees are largely exported as woodchips to Japan, for paper manufacture. This is a gross abuse by a government entity of a natural resource. The entire logging process is wasteful and destructive, as follows. Current machine logging practices remove all the bigger trees, particularly on ridge lines and upper slopes. 60% of these trees are then left dumped on the ground, in a tangle of leaf and branch debris, which dries out, providing a potent source of fuel for lightning strikes and future forest fires. These harvested areas are also left with soil compacted and this produces poor growing conditions for "regeneration", as I have observed in areas harvested some years ago. Harvested areas become dangerous fuel areas for bushfire initiation. (I watched and photographed the start of the 2019 Currowan megafire, which started on a logged ridge some 5 km east of my home). With increasing climate heat and a drying climate in SE New South Wales, the fire situation in logged areas with forest "trash" and branches on the ground is only going to worsen, due to logging practices.

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

Forests provide essential habitat for threatened species, both animal and plant. While many small plants can regrow from seed, animals and birds killed by removal of their feed trees and den spaces do not recover. We can see this in the huge population drops in koalas, greater gliders, lesser gliders, possums of all species, Swift Parrots, Glossy Black Cockatoos and other fauna now list as threatened.

Mature forests also provide an essential moderation of climate extremes, by enabling precipitation, providing canopy shading lowering ground temperatures, protecting soil from drying out, and enabling function of the entire ecosystem including fungal interactions in soils and root zones. They also regulate water runoff and provide essential filtering of water, removing mud and mitigating flooding. Forests also absorb CO2 and store carbon in tree trunks and canopies. They provide essential shade and wind protection for the growth of multi-layered plant communities, which in turn provide habitat and shelter for animals and birds. The value of intact forests goes beyond their habitat values; they are also invaluable for human mental health, as places to visit and restore the soul in nature. Their spiritual value to indigenous people is undoubted and should be respected.

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

I have been told by a relative in the building industry (an estimator) that NO native forest hardwood is now used in the NSW and ACT house-building industries. It has been replaced by treated pine (plantation grown). (Native hardwoods require long curing and processing times

compared to pine, and are more difficult to work). External use of native hardwoods used to be common for verandahs etc, but is now largely prohibited due to fire regulations since the 2019-20 fires. It is thus misleading of the native forestry lobby to claim that house-building will be impacted in NSW if native forest logging is stopped. Similarly, rail sleepers are today most often constructed of concrete and telephone poles most often of steel. There is still some demand for native hardwoods in internal flooring and in rural fencing, but this demand could be met from plantation timber.

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

The heavy taxpayer subsidies of government native forest logging have distorted the marketplace for Private Native Forestry, as FCNSW receives so little for the trees that it cuts down for woodchips. Hardwood could be grown in plantations and sold profitably if this was not the case. Softwood is already supplied from plantations and imports, and already these sources supply the marketplace for timber and timber products. The switching from native forest logging to plantation production of timber would result in higher quality timber products for a variety of purposes and a more efficient industry. Already cleared land of marginal agricultural value could be utilised for timber plantations.

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

State forests have an essential role in protecting biodiversity and the overall environment. The role of forests in ameliorating climate extremes has long been documented in the scientific literature. Forests are essential for maintaining water quality and mitigating flooding in river systems. This in turn protects downstream communities and industries such as inshore fishing and aquaculture. (The local Clyde R. oyster-growing industry on the coast was severely impacted by a flooding event, which was worsened by the runoff of huge amounts of mud from logged areas upstream, in previously forested areas that are now bare ridgetops).

Forests also provide opportunities for delivering tourism outcomes and enhancing local business income from visitors. Examples of these are activities such as mountain bike riding and bushwalking and forest camping. Unfortunately FCNSW has seen fit to log native forests in areas designated as bike trails and future national parks, such as the proposed Great Koala National Park.

In terms of "job losses", the 240 people employed in the native forest logging industry in southern NSW could be redeployed into plantation establishment and management. Many of the people quoted as being in the "timber industry" are actually employed in manufacturing composite timber products in factories, and there is no reason these jobs would be affected by an end to native forest logging, since the raw materials are not obtained from native forest logging.

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

The biodiversity benefits of stopping logging have been mentioned above under point 2. As mentioned above, intact forests store carbon and moderate climate change, while logging releases greenhouse gases and worsens climate extremes, by its effect on rainfall patterns, drought, flooding, and heat buildup. Logging also worsens wildfire risk by providing huge dumps

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of discarded tree material on the ground, which in the present hotter climate dry out, and are already a dangerous fuel source.

As climates become hotter, the logging and mismanagement of native forests means that future forests will not grow at the same rate as under previous climate conditions. Climate change threatens the very existence of native forests. It is therefore essential that logging of native forests ceases immediately.

The use of "offsets" in the carbon market is a deception as offsets always involve the destruction of native vegetation, in one form or another, and its non-replacement.



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