

NAME REDACTED

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

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Dear Independent Forestry Panel,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute a submission on the sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW.

The people in the regional community I come from, throughout my lifetime, have been committed to the conservation of native forests. They have successfully campaigned many times over to protect our local forests, including standing in the way of the destruction of important native habitat for endangered species by Forestry.

Those same people came out in force in their roles with RFS fighting devastating bush fires in 2019. They witnessed firsthand as the very conservation areas they had created slowed and cooled those impossibly hot fires.

It is shocking in 2024 to see Forestry persist with plans to log local native habitats for koalas and greater gliders including the Bulga Forest and Kiwarrik State Forests; In 2024 they expanded the intended area of logging in Bulga State Forest by 10 times what it was before, to 2000ha. In the face of increasing extreme weather events, climate change and native threatened species loss, decisions like this apply a retrograde logic that is oblivious to the changing times and is unsustainable and dangerous.

Meanwhile, increased police powers since 2022, along with increased maximum penalties for protesting in NSW mean that younger people with children struggling to contend with cost-of-living pressures, will be less inclined to protest. As a result, it is the same people protesting now that have been for the last 40 years or so. They know the urgent need for action and change, because they understand the science. In response to their protests, they are being handled more punitively than ever by police, while taking a stand to protect the future for all of us.

Out of the protesters willing to risk arrest, there is an increasingly high proportion of people in their 70s and 80s now locking on to machinery in all kinds of weather to try to stop the logging operations. Then, after hours of enduring this, they are being arrested and locked up without bail not knowing whether they will face fines of over \$22,000 or be imprisoned for over 2 years. They are our elders and grannies fighting our government for the future of all our grandkids.

I hope the work of the panel will lead to our governments doing their jobs properly instead of robbing future generations. The government should be working alongside our elders to conserve and safeguard the valuable public assets of our native forests- instead of using taxpayer funded law enforcement to fight off our grannies who are trying to do exactly that.

My submission is inspired by these local protests against the logging of State Forests as mentioned above. My focus is on the following topic area:

1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

Due to habitat loss for threatened and endangered species, soil degradation, and the long-term impacts of logging on water systems, I do not believe the current Forestry operations in NSW are sustainable. While some may argue Forestry is using selective practices that can mitigate such loss and damage, I do not believe this is in practice being managed sensibly or effectively. I also do not believe current decision making pays adequate regard to the fact that we are in a climate

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emergency. The cumulative impacts of multiple operations must be considered and weighed up in the current context. A reflective bigger picture view and intelligent long-term planning must be achieved and implemented.

Sustainability means meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own, and it requires balancing economic viability, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility. When applied to NSW Forestry logging activities, several key points under the principles of sustainability come into focus for me:

Environmental:

- Habitat loss for threatened and endangered species.
- Disruption of ecosystems and biodiversity loss.
- The carbon storage potential of forests is crucial in the fight against climate change, and unsustainable logging practices undermines this role.
- Outdated environmental regulations and a lack of regulatory enforcement being activated to hold Forestry accountable to regulation.

Economic:

- Native forest logging in NSW is not financially sustainable, once you factor in the costs of land rehabilitation, the loss of ecosystem services, and the potential for increased carbon emissions.
- Transitioning toward more sustainable business models including eco-tourism, Indigenous knowledge sharing, plantation forestry and agroforestry would improve economic outcomes and reduce environmental damage.
- Managing State forests as for their conservation value and as tourism and Indigenous knowledge assets is a better investment plan for the future.
- The rising costs of insurance due to increasing extreme weather with climate change must be considered part of the immediate term equation now.

Social responsibility:

- As mentioned in my introduction, currently Forestry logging operations are in direct conflict with community interests and values in the local areas where I live and come from.
- I am also aware of them conflicting with efforts to shift towards increasing involvement of local traditional Indigenous owners in land management and fire control practices.
- In my view a sustainable approach would be to have Forestry performing a singular role and agenda as the guardian of State Forests dedicated to conservation values on behalf of the community.
- The protection of native forests that host endangered native species can provide recreation, tourism, and ecosystem services that benefit our communities for generations to come.

Long term resilience:

- The increasing pressure from climate change, including more intense bushfires, droughts, and changing rainfall patterns, means forestry practices must adapt its approach and move away from logging State Forests. This will require a paradigm shift such as the adoption of methods learned from traditional custodians on how to manage the land responsibly.
- Plantation forests may offer a more sustainable model, while native forest logging presents environmental and economic challenges that do not align with long-term sustainability goals.
- Integrating more stringent environmental safeguards, transitioning to plantations, and involving local and Indigenous communities in decision-making are key to achieving truly sustainable forestry practices in NSW.

My call to action and timeframe:

## Public submission

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I would like to see a moratorium effecting the immediate cessation of logging in Bulga and Kiwarra State Forests because there are inadequate protections in place for endangered koalas and greater gliders in these areas. These being local to me are of particular concern to me personally.

More broadly across NSW due to the ineffectiveness of Regional Forest Agreements to protect native endangered species, particularly in the aftermath of the bush fires, logging by Forestry should also cease. Native forests, in regions like the North Coast, South Coast, and parts of the Southern Tablelands, provide critical habitat for koalas. State forests in the Coffs Harbour and Grafton areas are also home to significant koala populations, as they are in the Pilliga region. All these areas are subject to Forestry logging operations.

Several of these areas have also been recognised as habitat for the greater glider (e.g. Southern and Northern Tablelands and parts of NE NSW). The swift parrot, listed as critically endangered, migrates through NSW, feeding on flowering eucalypts in forests such as those in the South Coast and Tablelands.

Numerous other species are also impacted by NSW forestry operations, such as the long-footed potoroo, spotted-tailed quoll, and various frog species, which rely on forest environments that are being logged. River red gum forests along the Murray River, home to numerous bird and animal species, also face the impacts of logging.

Forestry must end logging of native forests and transition within the shortest time possible to a more sustainable model of operations to protect these national treasures.

Outdated forestry activities are currently using public money to continue flogging a dead business model while also obliging taxpayer funded police to arrest protesters, including our grannies. It is criminal and enough is enough.

Thank you very much for hearing my submission.

Dear Independent Forestry Panel,

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Meanwhile, increased police powers since 2022, along with increased maximum penalties for protesting in NSW mean that younger people with children struggling to contend with cost-of-living pressures, will be less inclined to protest. As a result, it is the same people protesting now that have been for the last 40 years or so. They know the urgent need for action and change, because they understand the science. In response to their protests, they are being handled more punitively than ever by police, while taking a stand to protect the future for all of us.

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