

NAME REDACTED

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

I call on the panel to lay the groundwork to end native forest logging and transition fully to a sustainable plantation based timber industry.

Victoria and Western Australia have recently committed to ending native forest logging and now it's time for NSW to do the same - transition subsidies into this failing industry. And be smarter. NSW Native logging is heavily subsidised and employs a relatively small workforce whose skills are in demand in related plantation sectors - or elsewhere such as construction; infrastructure, National Parks and wildlife; and emergency services.

A 2023 Frontier Economics report, commissioned by the NSW Nature Conservation Council, shows the NSW Forestry Corporation received tax payer funded grants worth \$246.9m since the 2019//20 financial year and operated with a loss of \$28.2m in the same period.

The report notes native forest logging has become "financially risky for governments and their forest harvesting activities eat away at the increasingly scarce environmental value of Australia's dwindling forests.

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

Logging destroys the habitat of forest fauna, removing food sources and nesting sites like the naturally-formed hollows that are abundant in old trees.

There is a plethora of science which shows that logging reduces biodiversity and threatens some species with extinction.

The level of protection currently afforded to the state's threatened species are inadequate.

Forestry NSW has not demonstrated it can adequately conduct pre-clearing surveys with rigour, in areas such as Tallaganda and beyond. When environmentally sensitive sites are located, prescribed buffer zones are often inadequate - for example requiring 100metres buffer from the Endangered coastal emu egg nest recently found in Candole State Forest.

The panel needs to revisit recommendations from the Natural Resource Commission, who reported in 2021 that forestry rules were not fit for the biodiversity crisis we are now in, after the black summer bushfire season.

The Commission called for the suspension or restriction of logging in extreme and high-risk areas to protect environmental values.

The NSW Government has not yet acted on these recommendations and industrial scale logging is now occurring in important refuges and remnant habitat for species such as koalas and greater gliders, with very poor regulatory oversight and environmental controls.

The NSW Government is currently logging parts of the proposed Great Koala National Park and the state owned logging company has been reported for repeated illegal logging in glider habitat. Logging needs to be halted immediately in areas containing high numbers of koalas, greater gliders and other endangered species- such as Bulga and Kiwarrak.

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

Native hardwoods from native forest logging are less than 10% of Australia's log production. Hardwood and softwood plantations already provide over 90% of Australia's log production. The majority of hardwood logs now being harvested from plantations are being turned into woodchips.

We don't need to log native forests to build houses.

There are long-standing market changes that have reduced the demand for native forest products and put downward pressure on prices. The most significant of these are:

- the increase in competition in the domestic structural timber market from plantation softwoods,
- the increase in competition in solid wood markets from domestic and imported engineered wood products, and

- the increase in competition in export woodchip markets from domestic and foreign plantations.'

(Pg.6, Frontier Economics Report, 2023)

Any data provided by Forestry Corporation about wood supply and forest yields be subject to peer review and be made public.

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

Instead of subsidising native forest logging NSW needs to invest in supporting sectors which value add to yields from existing plantation forests.

A failure to setup transition plans for workers impacted by any ban on native forest logging now calls into question the cozy relationship between the NSW government and the CFMEU.

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

Given the paucity in environmental controls and oversight, and legal framework which allows NSW Forestry Corporation to operate; State forests should not be considered as providing a significant role in species preservation.

Where these species are present the priority should be the creation, resourcing and tourism within protected areas such as the proposed Koala National Park.

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

Forest carbon accounting rules allow emissions from logging to be offset by re-growth in the much larger area of the entire production forest estate. However there is a significant lag in actual carbon mitigation -as this requires regrowth for the benefits to be realised.

Any forest logged that is older than 30 years cannot recover carbon lost before 2050. The average carbon stock in a logged forest is about 50% below that in an old growth forest(https://www.wildernessaustralia.org.au/forests_stand_for_life).