Independent Forestry Panel

# Public submission

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

Zero.
For reasons, please, refer to topic area 2.

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

The Total Value of Forests: $150 trillion
The exceptional value of intact forest ecosystems
Abstract
As the terrestrial human footprint continues to expand, the amount of native forest that is free from significant damaging human activities is in precipitous decline. There is emerging evidence that the remaining intact forest supports an exceptional confluence of globally significant environmental values relative to degraded forests, including imperiled biodiversity, carbon sequestration and storage, water provision, indigenous culture and the maintenance of human health. Here we argue that maintaining and, where possible, restoring the integrity of dwindling intact forests is an urgent priority for current global efforts to halt the ongoing biodiversity crisis, slow rapid climate change and achieve sustainability goals. Retaining the integrity of intact forest ecosystems should be a central component of proactive global and national environmental strategies, alongside current efforts aimed at halting deforestation and promoting reforestation.
Source: https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-018-0490-x
Forests are a source of fiber, fuel, food and fodder, and they provide livelihoods for millions of people. The estimated total value of the world's forests is as much as $150 trillion, with the ability of forests to regulate the climate through carbon storage accounting for as much as 90% of that total value. Over 1.6 billion people depend on forests for food or fuel, and some 70 million people worldwide call forests home. Forests help mitigate climate change and improve soil, air and water quality. They are fundamental life forms and provide for the continuity of the world's biodiversity. Forests function as a single organism, minimising flooding and drought, and decimating air pollution.
70 million people worldwide - including many Indigenous communities - call forests home. Forests provide us with oxygen, shelter, jobs, water, nourishment and fuel. With so many people dependent on forests, the fate of our forests may determine our own fate as well.
Forests help prevent erosion and enrich and conserve soil, helping to protect communities from landslides and floods and producing the rich topsoil needed to grow plants and crops. Forests also play an important role in the global water cycle, moving water across the earth by releasing water vapor and capturing rainfall. They also filter out pollution and chemicals, improving the quality of water available for human use. The destruction of forests has a knock-on effect on agriculture and can affect the production of the food we eat.
Human health is inextricably linked to forest health. Deforestation has serious consequences on the health of people directly dependent on forests, as well as those living in cities and towns, as it increases the risk of diseases crossing over from animals to humans. Meanwhile, time spent in

forests has been shown to have a positive benefit on conditions including cardiovascular disease, respiratory concerns, diabetes and mental health.

Why forests matter for nature

As forests are home to over 80% of terrestrial biodiversity, including 80% of amphibians, 75% of birds and 68% of mammals. Deforestation of some tropical forests could lead to the loss of as many as 100 species a day. Our ability to stop biodiversity loss is heavily dependent on our ability to stop forest loss.

When we take away the forest, it is not just the trees that go. The entire ecosystem begins to fall apart, with dire consequences for all of us. Forests provide habitats for plants and animals, including some of our planet's most iconic species like the tiger, giant panda, gorilla and orangutan.

Habitat loss is one of the main causes of biodiversity loss, as land that once was forest is cleared for other uses. Forest-dwelling wildlife populations (which include mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians) have declined on average by 69% since 1970, with tropical forests such as the Amazon the worst hit.

Why forests are so important for the climate

Forests are the largest storehouses of carbon after the oceans, as they absorb this greenhouse gas from the air and lock it away above and below ground. So, it is no surprise that when we cut down or damage our forests, we release huge amounts of carbon emissions that contribute to the climate crisis.

But forests are also important as they can help protect people and nature from the consequences of a warming world. As the impacts of climate change - including floods and storms from rising sea levels and increased precipitation - become more frequent and severe, forests can provide a crucial buffer for our communities.

Extreme events caused by climate change, such as more frequent wildfires, limit the ability of our forests to regenerate. At the same time, deforestation contributes to climate change by increasing the risk of fires. Stopping deforestation and restoring forests is a crucial part of climate action.

Source: https://wwf.panda.org/discover/our_focus/forests_practice/importance_forests/

The Forest Imperative

The world's forestsâ€"which today cover 30% of the earth's land surfaceâ€"are an incredibly valuable resource, storing massive amounts of carbon, helping to purify water and air, ensuring natural biodiversity, and providing livelihoods for millions of people. But despite the vital importance of forests, they are under worldwide assault, with the equivalent of 30 soccer fields disappearing every minute.

In response to the growing crisis, BCG conducted a comprehensive analysis to answer three questions: What is the financial value of global forests? What are the biggest threats to that value? How and to what extent can we preserve (or even increase) the value of forests?

Our analysis addresses the value of forests across four attributes: their climate regulatory function; their environmental benefits, such as air purification and water filtration; their commercial output; and their social value. We realize that quantification of these dimensions is difficult, and certainly always imperfect. For example, the value of forest biodiversity cannot fully be captured. Nevertheless, we believe that a valuation is essential in order to create transparency with respect to the value of forests in comparison with other assets and thereby introduce clarity to a discussion that is often dominated by emotion.

Among our findings:

The estimated total value of the world's forests is as much as $150 trillionâ€"nearly double the value of global stock markets. The ability of forests to regulate the climate through carbon storage is by far the largest component of that total value, accounting for as much as 90%.

The most serious threats are not always the ones garnering the most public attention. Recent media coverage, for example, has intensely focused on the devastation brought by wildfires. However, our analysis finds that land use changes and rising global temperatures, major drivers of deforestation, will actually be the main causes of forest value losses. Of the five primary threats to forest value that we identified, these two account for about 70% of projected losses between now and 2050. Ultimately, if the five major threats to forests today are not addressed, global forest value will drop by roughly 30% by 2050.

All stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, the private sector, and consumers, have a role to play. Governments are particularly important and must create a robust regulatory framework that drives real change. We have identified six critical actions that can protect forests and limit deforestationâ€"and therefore preserve forest value: (1) restore and plant forests for the purpose of protection as well as wood production, sustainably manage these and more of the existing forests, and increase their productivity; (2) boost sustainable and productive agriculture; (3) reduce meat consumption; (4) push for deforestation-free production of palm oil, soy, beef, and timber; (5) increase wood recycling; and (6) limit global temperature increase to less than 2°C. Ambitious but realistic action, including follow-through on current global pledges for forest protection, can preserve 20% of value and thus reduce value loss to about 10% by 2050.

To preserve the full value of today's forests we would need even more aggressive steps, such as new forest plantings that cover an area larger than Australia and, critically, sustainable management of 100% of new and existing forests, up from the 40% currently.

As our analysis underscores, the value of forests and the threats facing them are inextricably linked to climate change. Existing forests store CO2 in the form of carbon on a massive scaleâ€"and young, growing forests absorb significant amounts of CO2. However, on a global scale, because of deforestation (the permanent loss of forested area) and decay, forests are now releasing more CO2 than they are absorbing, meaning forests are net carbon emitters. Depending on the actions we take today, forests will either be a powerful tool for combating climate change or a major contributor to rising CO2 levels.

If adopted, the measures we outline in this report would drive significant progress in protecting forest value, something that must be achieved if society is to ensure a sustainable planet for future generations. With a collective push for action, we can preserve a supremely valuable, but increasingly endangered, global asset.

The capability of forests to regulate climate through carbon capture and storage is the most important factor in our value assessment, accounting for 65% to 90% of the total value of forests.

Source:
https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/the-staggering-value-of-forests-and-how-to-save-them

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UNEP

Why do forests matter?

Forests cover one-third of the Earth's land mass, serving as critical pillars for both environmental health and human well-being.

These ecosystems are not only the home to over half of the world's terrestrial species but also play a pivotal role in combating climate change through their natural processes of carbon sequestration. Known as forest mitigation, this process is essential in reducing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, thus averting more extreme global temperature rises.

Climate mitigation potential of forests

Recognizing forests' role in achieving a sustainable future is crucial, especially in the context of limiting global warming to 1.5°C.  This goal is unattainable without significant contributions from

forests, which can be realized through ending deforestation and enhancing forest management and reforestation efforts.

The mitigation potential of forests, estimated between 4.1 and 6.5 GtCO2e by 2030, highlights their indispensable role in meeting international climate goals. Forest conservation, sustainable management and restoration practices offer a cost-effective means of climate mitigation, potentially accounting for up to 30% of the available mitigation measures over the next decade.

Benefits of forest: beyond carbon storage

Forests provide a multitude of benefits that are crucial for the health of our planet and the well-being of its inhabitants. Beyond their critical role in carbon storage, forests serve as vital shields against extreme weather conditions, such as storms and floods. They are essential in supplying drinking water to nearly half of the world's largest cities, highlighting their significance in our daily lives. Forests also offer invaluable resources and protection for communities that rely on them for their livelihoods and security.

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is at the forefront of efforts to ensure that forests around the globe are preserved and managed sustainably. These efforts aim to secure a healthier future for both people and the environment, acknowledging the profound connection between human well-being and the natural world.

Urgent action is needed now more than ever

Despite these benefits, the world faces the challenge of ongoing deforestation, which is a major contributor to as much as 21% of total greenhouse gas emissions attributed to the agriculture, forestry and other land use sector. The impact of deforestation is profound, undermining climate resilience efforts and threatening the livelihoods of forest-dwelling communities. The primary drivers of tropical deforestation include the production of commodities like palm oil, beef, soy, and timber, which necessitates a shift towards decoupling commodity production from forest loss.

Addressing this challenge requires a multifaceted approach, as outlined by UNEP, focusing on enhancing knowledge, creating enabling conditions, and securing finance for forest protection and sustainable management. The UN-REDD Program, the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, and other initiatives play vital roles in this effort.

Additionally, recent efforts by tropical forest countries, underpinned by international frameworks and funding mechanisms, have started to yield credible and beneficial mitigation outcomes. Yet, to fully unleash forests' mitigation potential and contribute to Paris commitments and biodiversity targets, a coherent planning and financing pathway is essential. This need becomes even more pressing as we approach key milestones such as COP30, aiming for significant progress in forest conservation and climate action by 2030.

Investing in forests not only addresses climate change and biodiversity loss but also offers substantial economic returns and job creation opportunities. By prioritizing forests in global political agendas, we can ensure a sustainable future for all.

Source:

https://www.unep.org/topics/forests/why-do-forests-matter

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

The only viable demand for "timber" in form of living green forest is that of wildlife, plant life and a myriad of insects, and other depending life. As relates to housing, I refer to sustaining homes for koalas, gliders, possums, owls,tawny frog mouths, eagles, frogs etc.etc. who cannot survive without the forest. This is foremost the concern of our planet and directly contributes to our survival as well as to that of animal and plant species. seek an alternative to grow timber products for the market. Don't touch our public state forests, old growth forests and other. Jobs can be created in numbers much higher when governments and agencies concentrate their combined

efforts on reforestation and regeneration, which is urgently needed and expands with every new football field size of chopped down trees. The forest industry is not sustainable, relies on subsidies and sees its moneys siphoned away into the pockets of CEO's. It's a dead end industry to the detriment of our survival for generations to come. If the forest industry invests money in reforestation and regeneration, not only will thousands of new jobs be created, but the future of coming generations secured. Forests are the first aid kit that needs to be in every persons pocket, we cannot afford to lose more, we need to start today to plant trees - partly to supply timber to the industry, and for the most part to give back to a myriad of species the food and shelter for their survival. That's how we, the human being, survive. As the old saying goes, you cannot eat money, or, we'd be pretty stupid to think that eroding other living beings livelihood will secure our own.

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

Nonsense. You know pretty well that the Private Native Forestry is totally unsustainable. It is largely uncontrollable and open slather to the irresponsible land owners and quickly loses its footing, meaning PNF creates an unstoppable avalanche of clear felling simply because farmers see more short term profit. The questionable methods of deforestation are degrading land which in turn invites invasive species that need to be eradicated. Often these invasive species are foreign grasses that spread fast and unfortunately allow grass fires to turn wild fires into runaway catastrophes. This is one of many aspects of the problem of random clear felling that PNF methods known for. There is enough open land for plantation timber to satisfy the hungry timber industry. Apart from the option of plantation timber, there is the question of over use of timber, especially in the light of timber harvest currently being exported to overseas markets in form of wood chips. So please, do not argue we need timber to meet supply needs when in reality you allow chopping down precious forests for wood chips.

**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 deliver. Environmentally in keeping our carbon in check, regulating climate and local weather, producing clean air and oxygen, sequestering heavy metal and pollutants in the air, stabilising earth by an expansive root system, producing clean water, cooling the planet, housing wild life and insect species, like bees, supplying medicinal plants, building a green lung for urbanised centers.
Economically in recreation and tourism. Socially in offering people an escape to the wilrderness that has enormous health benefits and allows people to enjoy the freedom of recreation in going on hiking trips, bike riding, gatherings for celebrations, camping and all sorts of out door activities that brings together families an friends. First Nations forest management is equisite and a lot can be gained from listening and learning and allowing the people who know the forest best to guide and inform the wider communities of their unparalleled knowledge. Sharing is not the only aspect. Through allowing aboriginal story telling to be part of the cultural experience, Firs Nations people may purposefully safe keep their cultural knowledge and wisdom. This is crucial for their survival and will support the oldest culture on earth, and credit the achievement of that culture to sustain and enhance the forests that we inherited for well over 100.000 years. Its a good example for modern man to learn to appreciate the value of life giving earth, of which the forests play such an immensely important role, indeed, without them, the future of our planet is in great danger. So, better buckle up and go for the ride with First Nations wisdom if and in which form ever it is available. Can't beat their models of sustainability!

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**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**

Governments, agencies and industries cannot trade in carbon and biodiversity currency, because it does not exist. It's an invention and is at it's best green wash and a trap. It's happening just now with green zoning the country. A method that kick starts the further growth of urban development, industry expansion, mining, nuclear power and all industries and business of the same that do not give a straw to environmental concerns let alone the protection of our diverse ecological niches and biodiversity. A simple trade in allows business as usual, nay, on the double, because some other untouched green patch of so called biological value is being used to mitigate the climate risks that are necessarily associated with such industries that use quantities of unsustainable materials, for example, concrete in massive amounts. This is not an adaptation to the risks of climate change, on the contrary, it is a sure fire method to exacerbate the risks. And remember, climate change is real and here. As far as greenhouse gas emissions go, leave the forest alone, and you have the opposite. The longer you wait, the more forested area is lost, the higher the emissions, the risk of wild fires, droughts and flooding. To go ahead and cut down trees for the short term benefit of industry demand and there soon will be no chance reversing the negative affects of climate change. Trees our our savior.