

# Public submission

NAME REDACTED

Submission ID: 205300

---

**Organisation:** *N/A*

---

**Location:** *Redacted*

---

**Supporting materials uploaded:** *Attached overleaf*

---

Submission date: 10/13/2024 11:24:11 PM

I am writing to show my **SUPPORT** for an **END TO NATIVE FOREST LOGGING** and a **FUTURE BASED ON SUSTAINABLE PLANTATION OPERATIONS** instead.

### **About Me**

I live in, and grew up in, rural NSW. As a result, I have a great appreciation for nature and a healthy environment. I enjoy spending time in nature and learning what I can about it. I also care a great deal about protecting nature as well. I am enormously proud of the unique flora and fauna we are fortunate to have in this country and am comforted to know that our forests are like natural '*time capsules*' providing us with all sorts of environmental and health benefits. I am also pleased to know that these places provide vital habitat to our iconic wildlife as well.

Unfortunately, I am concerned, alarmed, saddened and angered, that all of this could be lost, simply because we allow our native old growth forests to be logged! It is absurd that something so critical and valuable is being cut down and turned into something as worthless as "low-value products such as woodchips for export, pallets and firewood," <sup>1</sup> as stated by the Wilderness Society.

However the good news is, that I am not the only one who is concerned about this and would like things to change.

### **Public Opinion**

A survey by The Australia Institute found that 69% of Australians "support an end to native forest logging on public land across Australia" <sup>2</sup> and that in NSW, 70% of respondents support its end. That's two thirds of Australians, and nearly three quarters of NSW residents, who DO NOT want our native forests cut down! I too share the views of these respondents: we must stop destroying our native forests – now!

It's interesting to note that when the survey results are broken down, support to end logging comes from across the political spectrum, with the "highest level of support from Labor voters (79%), followed by Greens voters (76%), Coalition voters (62%), One Nation voters (61%) and Independent/Other voters (57%)" <sup>2</sup> adds The Australia Institute. As you can see, it's not just the traditional '*greenies*' who feel this way. This is clearly an issue that concerns people from all walks of life - native forest logging is very unpopular amongst the general public.

Actually around the world, many countries have banned native forest logging because it is, "unpopular and unprofitable, contributes heavily to climate change and is a major cause of species decline," <sup>3</sup> reports The Conversation. It explains that, "They have recognised the enormous impact of intact forests on biodiversity and climate change," <sup>3</sup> and that they have instead turned entirely to plantations for wood production.

The Conversation also adds that here in Australia, the following states: South Australia, the ACT, Western Australia and Victoria have all turned their backs on it too. Note that NSW is not on that list.

Meanwhile, the World Wide Fund for Nature-Australia (WWFA) has released a '*Tree Scorecard*' that ranks "which states and territories are leading the way in protecting and restoring trees." <sup>4</sup> Disgracefully, NSW is last on this list - despite seventy percent of its residents wanting an end to native forest logging! The WWFA recommends that in order to improve its score, NSW should "pledge to phase out native forest logging." <sup>4</sup>

### **Threat To Nature**

Logging of our native forests poses a major risk to the survival of our already threatened native animal species. "Since colonisation, we have lost more than one hundred known species of plants and animals and are at imminent risk of losing thousands more," <sup>5</sup> warns the Bob Brown Foundation. It also reveals this startling statistic: "the koala population in NSW today is just 52% of what it was in 2002." <sup>6</sup> That's nearly half of our koala population wiped out in less than three decades! What a shameful and distressing outcome.

Continued logging will likely contribute greatly to the extinction of forest dependent wildlife. For example, The Wilderness Society writes that a recent parliamentary inquiry found that, "koalas will be extinct in the wild in NSW by 2050 unless their habitat is urgently protected." <sup>1</sup>

### *Koalas. Will. Be. Extinct.*

Do we really want to be the generation responsible for that?! What kind of legacy are we leaving for our future generations? Why should they have to endure the consequences of our shortsightedness? When it comes to native forest logging, there are no winners.

## **Benefits Of Forests To Wildlife**

Mature, established trees contain food, shelter and hollows for protection which makes them ideal safe and natural homes for our wildlife. More than a hundred species rely on these hollows (which can take many years to form) for their nests and dens. Considering how long it takes for new trees to grow and hollows to form, removing the homes these animals depend on for their very survival cannot be considered sustainable, nor is it fair to these innocent and defenceless creatures. This is especially so when we don't even need to log them at all.

## **Plantations**

The Bob Brown Foundation explains that "Australia currently has adequate plantation timber to meet its demands." <sup>7</sup> They presently provide both hardwood and softwood timber varieties, so they cater to our many and varied needs.

In 2021-2022, plantations provided almost ninety percent of Australia's harvested timber, "making commercial plantations the clear leader in commercial wood production," <sup>8</sup> writes Sustainable Forest Management. With more investment and support, there's no reason why one hundred percent could not be achievable.

Well the good news is, that just might happen. "In 2023, the Albanese government announced the launch of \$73 million in grants to support the establishment of new forestry plantations," <sup>8</sup> adds Sustainable Forest Management. So then, one has to wonder, why are we still cutting down our precious old growth forests? It beggars belief.

## **Benefits Of Forests To Humans**

Think of trees and forests and most people think of koalas and birds. However, it's not just these animals which rely on our trees. Many other creatures - big and small - do so as well.

Destroying our forests has a knock-on effect up and down the food chain. Each tree is a precious and delicate ecosystem of its own, making an important contribution to our overall environmental well-being. The very delicate balance in our ecosystems can be easily upset and can result in potentially dire (and unforeseen) consequences. Consequences that can affect us all - not just the animals living in the trees, but us humans too.

We are just as dependent on our forests as our wildlife is. The WWFA explains: “By protecting wildlife and the places they live, we are also protecting the essential things that make our lives possible and enrich us – from breathable air to clean water, food and energy, as well as recreational and spiritual value.”<sup>9</sup>

Our forests help to hold our land together and prevent it from being eroded. In turn, this regulates water flows and quality and keeps our waterways clear of sediment, which, if allowed to build up, can lead to flooding. And quite importantly, they also store greenhouse gases - which we desperately need right now!

It should also be noted that Australia's First Nations people hold a strong cultural and spiritual connection to our forests – a connection which forms part of their identity, and has existed for tens of thousands of years! It is disrespectful for anyone to think that it is acceptable to destroy that and to deny them access to a sacred part of their culture.

## **Bushfires**

Alarmingly, studies have also found that "Logging and thinning of forests can increase fire risk,"<sup>10</sup> writes Griffith University! It adds that “previously logged forest burned hotter than unlogged and old growth forest during fires,”<sup>10</sup> and that, “the link between fire severity and logging had been found in global studies.”<sup>10</sup>

Griffith University explains that research has learned that removing established trees, and their canopies, exposes the ground and undergrowth to wind and sunlight. This then causes it to dry out and die, thus increasing fuel loads. Waste from logging operations can also be left behind and further contribute to fuel loads. Reducing forest canopies also removes critical wind breaks, which allows wind to potentially intensify and fan any bushfires burning in the area.

So for this reason alone, why on Earth are we putting ourselves in danger by logging our native forests?!

Our wildlife was decimated by those devastating bushfires just a few years ago. Now, it is struggling to recover, so we must protect what precious little amount of it is left. Habitat loss has seen animals having to go searching for food and new homes. In doing so, they

venture into our towns and suburbs, and are being injured or killed by traffic on our roads and by cats and dogs in our neighbourhoods. All because we are cutting down their homes – something that we don't need to be doing at all.

### **Benefit Of Forests To Recreation And Tourism**

Let's also not forget that there are a great deal of people, not just in Australia but all over the planet, who enjoy spending time in nature. Whether it's to soak up the ambience, for recreational activities such as bushwalking, to appreciate the beauty of nature or to observe wildlife, these potential tourists are prepared to travel to our forests (and spend money in our economy) to do so. They are not likely to bother if they know, and/or see, that these very forests, and their iconic inhabitants, are disappearing. Can we afford to dismiss the tourism dollar?

### **Overall Impact**

The world has been horrified at what is happening in the Amazon rainforest. Not just for the impact it has on its inhabitants – human and animal, but also the impact it is having on the environment and the world's climate. Do we really want our reputation to be tarnished as well? "In 2019, 23,000 hectares of woody vegetation in NSW was lost to logging. That's 36 Sydney Cricket Grounds logged every single day," <sup>7</sup> explains the Bob Brown Foundation.

It seems absurd that in 2024, we are still destroying such a massive amount of old growth forest - forests that have taken centuries or more to grow. We have the ability to switch to sustainable plantation based operations, so why on Earth are we not doing so? At the rate we are clearing it, it won't be long before there is nothing left. Then what?

### **Uses Of Logged Timber**

I am concerned at the apparent, or relative, wastefulness of native forest logging. My understanding is that our trees are logged first and then classified to determine what type of end product they will be used for. According to Timber NSW, hardwood logs of lesser '*quality*' are considered "unsuitable for use in solid wood products" <sup>11</sup> and therefore are used to produce "lower value products" <sup>11</sup> such as "pulpwood for woodchip export or as firewood," <sup>11</sup> sawdust, or even just burnt for energy!

These lower value products can "constitute a large proportion of the market," <sup>11</sup> explains

Timber NSW, which also adds that, "Decorative hardwood furnishings account for small volumes." <sup>11</sup> So does that mean three dozen cricket grounds' worth of our precious forests are predominantly being destroyed per day, for mere uses such as woodchips and sawdust?! REALLY?!

Surely intact and healthy native old-growth forests are far more valuable to us, our wildlife, the environment and the planet, than that!

### **Public Funding**

How much public money is being spent on programmes to protect our environment? How much public money is spent supporting the logging of our native forests? Is this investment then just negating our efforts in environmental protection and restoration? Is this investment worthwhile? Or, is investing in native forest logging an unwise use of public funds? Are the benefits worth the cost?

It doesn't make sense to subsidise native forest logging in NSW with public money when it is not economically sustainable. The Wilderness Society reports that in 2022-2023, "the state-owned Forestry Corporation of NSW reported \$15 million in losses" <sup>12</sup> and \$9 million in losses the previous year, and a \$20 million loss the year before that! That's a total of \$44 million dollars - money which could be used instead to help the transition away from native forest logging.

### **Transition Away From Logging**

WWFA commissioned a report into the transition away from old growth logging. It presents "strong evidence that now is the time to transition out of native forest logging in New South Wales," <sup>13</sup> as it could be beneficial for these regions and their workers - with the right support.

According to the report, "workers would likely find alternative employment in management of protected forest areas, recreation and tourism, plantation-based forestry work, fire and invasive species management and the management of carbon and biodiversity credits." <sup>11</sup> "The forestry-to-plantations transition in NSW is inevitable, necessary, and overdue," <sup>11</sup> added the WWFA's Chief Conservation Officer.

So it appears very possible that there is indeed a future for our forest regions that doesn't

involve the destruction of the very resource that makes them special. There is no time like the present to begin this long overdue transition. The sooner we start, the better – for everyone.

### **Non-Compliance**

It is extremely concerning to read that multiple instances where "non-compliance actions issued from the EPA to Forestry Corp" <sup>7</sup> have occurred in the past, as reported by the Bob Brown Foundation. Any legislation, exemptions or loopholes which allow the logging of our forests to occur, need to be removed – now! And any entity guilty of non-compliance needs to be reprimanded and prevented from re-offending, or preferably, prevented from operating at all – now, before it offends again!

So as you can see, our forests are very valuable resources, for humans, wildlife, the environment and the planet. Cutting them down, just does not make any sense at all. Therefore, due to the reasons discussed above, I again want to show my **SUPPORT** for an **END TO NATIVE FOREST LOGGING** and a **FUTURE BASED ON SUSTAINABLE PLANTATION OPERATIONS** instead.

Thank you,





## References

1.

NSW Forest Logging, Stop The Chop

<https://www.wilderness.org.au/protecting-nature/deforestation/nsw-forests-stop-the-chop>

2.

Polling Research: Ending native forest logging across Australia

<https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/polling-research-ending-native-forest-logging-across-australia/>

3.

More Than Half Of NSW's Forests And Woodlands Are Gone As Ongoing Logging Increases Extinction Risks, Study Shows

<https://theconversation.com/more-than-half-of-nsws-forests-and-woodlands-are-gone-as-ongoing-logging-increases-extinction-risks-study-shows-235416>

4.

WWF Launches Australia's First National Trees Scorecard; NSW & QLD Rate 'Very Poor'

<https://wwf.org.au/news/2023/wwf-launches-australias-first-national-trees-scorecard-nsw-and-qld-rate-very/>

5.

Protect Native Forests

<https://bobbrown.org.au/campaigns/native-forests/>

6.

Meet An Icon

<https://bbf-koalas.netlify.app/page/meet-an-icon/>

7.

Causes Of Decline

<https://bbf-koalas.netlify.app/page/causes-of-decline/>

8.

The Value of Timber Plantations in Australia

<https://sustainableforestmanagement.com.au/timber-plantations-in-australia/>

9.

Regenerative Country

<https://wwf.org.au/what-we-do/regenerative-country/>

10.

Logging And Thinning Of Forests Can Increase Fire Risk

<https://news.griffith.edu.au/2021/02/10/logging-and-thinning-of-forests-can-increase-fire-risk/>

11.

Our Industry

<https://timbernewsw.com.au/our-industry-2/>

12.

NSW Budget Puts Untenable Logging Industry Ahead Of Nature

<https://www.wilderness.org.au/news-events/nsw-budget-puts-untenable-logging-industry-ahead-of-nature>

13.

New Report: Now Is The Time To Transition Out Of NSW Native Forest Logging

<https://wwf.org.au/news/2022/now-is-the-time-to-transition-out-of-nsw-native-forest-logging/>