

# Public submission

NAME REDACTED

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**Organisation:** *N/A*

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**Location:** *Australian Capital Territory*

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

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Submission date: 10/13/2024 11:58:16 PM

To whom it may concern,

## **RE: Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW**

I am a recreational trail runner. I spend a lot of time running on established trails through native forest in and around southern NSW and the ACT. In Australia, particularly along the east coast, we are blessed with incredible biodiversity in what remains of our native forests. However, it is beyond belief that in 2024 we continue to clear and log our native forests with the knowledge that it significantly contributes to climate change and is a major cause of species decline and extinction.

### **Protecting our native species**

Recent research by Ward et al (2024) found that ongoing logging in NSW affects the habitat of at least 150 species at risk of extinction, and 13 of these species are listed as critically endangered.<sup>1</sup>

Not one hour away from my Canberra home, in Tallaganda State Forest, native forest logging threatens the habitat of the nationally endangered greater glider<sup>2</sup>—the world's largest gliding marsupial and 2024 Marsupial of the Year<sup>3</sup>. Whilst we have some protective measures and guidelines in place for the NSW forestry industry that are aimed at protecting native habitats, the NSW Environment Protection Authority found breaches of the regulations on more than one occasion.<sup>4</sup>

Further, the Forestry Corporation is currently under investigation and has been convicted of breaching existing environmental regulations so many times that it seems to be treated as part of the ordinary course of business.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, whilst we threaten the habitat of our endangered native species, most of the product from this logging is turned into low-value, low-quality firewood and woodchip for export<sup>6</sup>.

### **Climate change**

Forests play a vital role in the carbon cycle by absorbing carbon dioxide (**CO<sub>2</sub>**) from the atmosphere and storing it in plants and soil.

The *Co-operative Research Centre for Greenhouse Accounting* estimates that Australian forests hold approximately 10.5 billion tonnes of carbon. This solid carbon has built up over the estimated 100-year lifespan for native eucalypt regrowth and is equivalent to nearly 38.5 billion tonnes of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>7</sup> Deforestation, through activities such as logging, releases this stored carbon back into the atmosphere, significantly contributing to global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

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<sup>1</sup> Ward, Michelle, et al. "Shifting baselines clarify the impact of contemporary logging on forest-dependent threatened species." *Conservation Science and Practice* (2024): e13185.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/sustainability/cross-party-push-to-end-native-forest-logging-as-1200-alleged-breaches-found-report-20231110-p5ej2n.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.marsupialoftheyear.com.au/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/2023/epamedia230830-epa-issues-stop-work-order-on-forestry-operations-in-tallaganda-state-forest>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry/regulating/register-of-crown-forestry-investigations>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests/forest-economics/forest-wood-products-statistics#daff-page-main>

<sup>7</sup> Ximenes F, Robinson M, and Wright B, (2007) *Forests, Wood and Australia's carbon balance*, Australian Government Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation and Cooperative Research Centre for Greenhouse Accounting, <https://fwpa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Forests-Plantations-Wood-Products-and-Australias-Carbon-Balance.pdf>

Additionally, the exposed areas created by logging also lead to secondary environmental losses through erosion, and invasion by non-native species.

### **Economic and societal benefits of conservation**

I have personally experienced the significant positive benefits to my mental health that come from exercising in, and connecting with, our native environment. These benefits have also been documented in many domestic and international health studies.<sup>8</sup>

I believe that protecting all of our native forests and making these spaces more accessible for people, will benefit the collective mental health of our nation, but will also help the local economy by attracting eco-tourism and outdoor recreation enthusiasts. National parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and marine reserves draw millions of visitors worldwide, and we see this locally in Canberra with responsible outdoor sporting events attracting participants from all over Australia, such as trail running (Stromlo Running Festival), orienteering (Inward Bound), and mountain-biking.

Conserving our native forests assists in preserving ecosystems that provide invaluable necessities like clean water, clean air, fertile soil, and pollination.

Lastly, as a mother of two children who love the environment so much that they have made their own submissions to this consultation process, I hope you understand how vitally important it is for you to make a recommendation to stop native forest logging for the benefit of future generations.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

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<sup>8</sup> Stier-Jarmer M, et al. "The Psychological and Physical Effects of Forests on Human Health: A Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses." *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2021 Feb 11;18(4):1770.