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

Native forest logging, particularly of old growth, is fundamentally unsustainable both economically and ecologically (see attached submission)

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

The forests of NSW have enormous environmental and cultural value, both for the ecological services they provide and for the preservation of native species they provide (see attached submission)

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

If calculations indicate that turning native forest into wood chips and palettes makes economic sense, the calculations and their framework are faulty (see attached submission)

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

No more native forest, either old growth or planted but established, should be harvested. Other State Forests land should hold timber plantations that are managed to optimise both economic and environmental outcomes (see attached submission)

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 should not be run as a profit making business, putting short term economic outcomes ahead of both environmental and social outcomes ((see attached submission)

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

Although economic calculations should not be the only thing driving forest management decisions, pertinent economic considerations should include ecosystem services and long term environmental outcomes (see attached submission)

12 October 2024

Dear Forestry Industry Action Panel

I am a historian at UNSW and father of two daughters, 12 and 16, who migrated to Australia 30 years ago from California. Australia's natural beauty and was one of the major reasons I came to the country and still one of the things I appreciate about it most. Both by myself and with my family I frequently enjoy exploring natural areas, walking, cycling, and occasionally kayaking. Our adventures have taken us not just to the National Parks and State Conservation areas, but also State Forests including Olney State Forest, Pokolbin, Barrington Tops, Coricudgy, and also those around Orange (Mullion, Kinross, and Glenwood I think). These are places full of beauty that should be preserved for future generations to visit, and also for the ecosystem services that Australia needs to remain the wonderful, liveable place that we love.

I have recently witnessed some terribly destructive timber harvesting in Olney State Forest, and although some of the forest cut there was planted, it was all still mature (50 year old) native forest full of wildlife. To think that this woodland is being stripped and turned to palettes and woodchips breaks my heart, and makes me question the both the economic calculations and the mandate of the NSW agencies managing these public resources. And the problem is not just Olney by any means. There are worse examples, such as the breakneck destruction of old growth forest on the North Coast and the impending extinction of the Koala in NSW that is it is driving.

To me, it is clear that the management of the State Forests as a profit-making business is not working. No doubt there are local parties that have become economically dependent on this irrational destruction, but I do not believe the way the State Forests are being managed reflects the interests or the values of most NSW residents. Forests do much more for us than harbour endangered native animals, although this too is important. They regulate watersheds, moderate the local climate, and store carbon, all of which are crucial to the economy and liveability of regional NSW and all Australia – one of the parts of the world most threatened by increasing global temperatures. As a student of environmental history, I see our civilization at the brink of environmental self destruction, and unlike those that have gone before, more foolish in that we have the knowledge to forsee and forestall it. The short sighted management of Australia's forests is no small part of that impending but still partly avoidable doom.

In sum, I would like to see the end of native forest logging on publicly managed land immediately, stronger controls protecting native vegetation on leased public lands, and overall changes to the management of NSW lands generally -- especially forests -- that will prioritise both short and long term environmental goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely

Nicolas Rasmussen