

SCOTT SLEDGE

Submission ID: 204124

Organisation: *Nimbin Environment Centre/Northern Rivers Guardians, Inc*

Location: *New South Wales*

Supporting materials uploaded: *N/A*

Submission date: 10/11/2024 3:32:07 PM

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

Submission to Independent Forestry Panel 10-10-2024

by Scott Sledge

I write on behalf of myself as well as for the Nimbin Environment Centre. I also represent the Northern Rivers Guardians, Inc. as I am President of both organisations.

The scope of the Panel's inquiry is broad and I will leave the detailed submissions to those with expertise. Our input is mainly of the general direction we want to the governments of NSW and all around the Commonwealth of AUSTRALIA. We ask the Panel to focus on the future.

The Parliament of NSW has recently debated this issue following a motion to cease logging public native forests. I was disappointed to hear representatives from most political parties saying inaccurate things about the benefits of logging, so very like the propaganda spread by spokespersons for the Forest Products Association.

I leave it to others to describe the economic pros and cons, but we have witnessed a marked decline in forest ecology in areas subjected to logging, with fewer native animals and poorer vigour of the regrowth, which mostly consists of invasive weeds. The prospect of better environmental outcomes from logging beggers belief. The timber industry fails in its attempts at replanting, if indeed there is any effort to regrow native forests at all. Mostly the areas look devastated after logging and any native trees that emerge are often surrounded by lantana and sometimes smothered by vines such as cat's claw.

To assert that restricting the violence against nature will cause Australia to import timber from other countries 'which don't have our strict environmental standards' is ridiculous. Firstly the 'standards' are routinely violated by the loggers and if they are caught breaking the agreed-upon rules any fines imposed are paid by the public purse, hence it is not useful to ask one agency of government to supervise another agency. Secondly, most of the timber currently used in construction comes from the straight trunks of selected species that are plantation grown. The branches, saplings and hollow-bearing old trees which are the natural habitat of our wildlife are reduced to woodchips for nefarious uses.

Australia has an unenviable record of native species decline and tops the charts for extinctions. We have a history of exploiting nature from a colonial past which pre-supposes that anything which does not belong to someone are free for the taking, and that allows destruction of habitats without proper regard for consequences. I will assume that you know about this and can see your way past destructive greed and help us to shape a truly sustainable future. I want to assure you that modern Australians have some commitment to providing a livable environment for future generations, even as we witness the effects of global climate change.

We call on the panel to look past the selfish desire of established industries to gain greater profits at the expense of Nature and give our society a direction to pivot towards stewardship of public lands and encourage plantation forests for timber needs. There will be more jobs and better work for those communities living near native forests to nurture rather than destroy our natural heritage.

Public submission

There will be better air and water quality and we can all help to save our planet .