

PHOEBE TORZILLO

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

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Dear Members of the Inquiry,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the continuation of native forest logging in New South Wales and to argue for its immediate cessation. This practice is not only environmentally unsustainable but also economically unviable, undermining our state's long-term interests.

Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

The native forest logging industry in NSW operates at a loss, effectively being subsidized by taxpayers. This financial burden is unjustifiable, especially considering the industry's declining yields. Since 2010, the yield from public native forests has decreased by 40%, yet we continue to fund this unprofitable venture.

Estimations by the Forestry Corporation of harvestable timber are consistently overestimated.

The removal of protections for mature trees in 2018 and intensified logging practices feel like a betrayal of our natural heritage, all in a futile attempt to extract more from a diminishing resource.

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

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Our native forests represent a significant economic and cultural asset, particularly in light of the emerging global nature-positive economy. These ecosystems provide invaluable ecological services, including carbon sequestration, water purification, soil conservation, and climate regulation.

The environmental impact of logging extends far beyond the immediate area:

It directly threatens 150 species in NSW

Logging increases fire threat and intensity

It causes erosion and waterway pollution

The practice facilitates the spread of invasive species

These forests hold significant cultural value, particularly for First Nations peoples, and are integral to their cultural practices and knowledge. They also provide recreational opportunities and health benefits for all NSW residents.

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

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The market for native forest products is declining rapidly. In 2023, logging in native forests accounted for only 9% of Australia's total log production, with half of these logs exported as woodchips. The recent example of Essential Energy moving away from power poles harvested from native forests illustrates this shift.

Hardwood sourced from native forests is no longer necessary for the uses identified in this section. Sawn and treated softwood logs and composite timber products can substitute for all current uses of native forest hardwoods.

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

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Plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production. We should prioritize a higher proportion of plantation logs for saw and veneer uses, rather than exporting them as woodchips. Subsidizing public native forest logging distorts the market away from the more profitable softwood plantation industry.

High-end and luxury native hardwood products should only be selectively harvested on private land under strict conditions, preserving our public forests.

## **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**

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By ending native forest logging, we could:

Develop carbon credit programs

Expand eco-tourism opportunities

Invest in research and development of sustainable forest products

Create jobs in forest restoration and management

First Nations Ranger Programs, such as the Githabul Rangers, have shown how indigenous knowledge and management can restore the natural and critical function of forests in the landscape.

## **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**

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Native forest logging in NSW is estimated to release 3.6 million tonnes of carbon every year. Ending this practice would be equivalent to removing 840,000 cars from our roads annually. Unlogged forests are more resilient to climate change and catastrophic fires, making them a crucial asset in our fight against climate change.

As we stand on the brink of a new global nature-positive economy, it is economically irresponsible to continue paying for an industry that destroys one of our most valuable resources. The continuation of native forest logging in NSW represents a net economic loss, both in immediate financial terms and in the destruction of a valuable public asset.

I urge the inquiry to recommend the immediate cessation of native forest logging in NSW. This action would not only protect our environmental heritage but also position our state for economic success in a future that values intact, functioning ecosystems.