

ROBERT BARREL

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**Location:** New South Wales

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

The native forest logging industry in NSW is unsustainable due to its detrimental environmental and economic impacts. Logging occurs in areas critical for threatened species, leading to habitat destruction for animals like Koalas and Southern Greater Gliders. The Black Summer fires demonstrated that logged forests become more flammable, increase the risk of severe wildfires and remain highly flammable for decades. Recurrent wildfires reduce timber supplies, further complicating the sustainability of logging operations.

Plantations are a better alternative, being less flammable and capable of growing timber more quickly. Additionally, the native forest logging industry relies heavily on government subsidies to remain operational. For example, Forestry Corp of NSW received \$249 million in subsidies in 2019-2020 but still incurred a \$28 million loss. These financial losses are consistent with the broader Australian logging industry and have led other States to end native forest logging.

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

I live in [REDACTED] on the South Coast where 40ha of healthy coastal forest is slated to be clear-felled for a 380-lot subdivision. The forest is home to two endangered species including the Greater Glider and four threatened species and it holds all the native forest environmental values outlined in this submission. But additionally, it has forever been very important to the Jerrinja people and for the last 60 years it has become an integral part of the villages of Callala Bay and Callala Beach. To lose this forest that we know and love would devastate our community.

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

The native forest logging industry in NSW primarily produces low-value products like woodchips, paper pulp, and packaging feedstock. Most sawn timber (90%) comes from plantations that are profitable and provide high employment, while native forest logging is unprofitable with declining job opportunities. Places like New Zealand and South Australia have increasingly met the demand for timber using plantation-only harvesting.

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

The future of NSW's forest and timber industries lies in plantations, which are more profitable, employ more people, generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions, and are less prone to fire compared to logged native forests. Well-managed plantations produce timber faster, reducing the risk of crop loss due to wildfires. While many current plantations replaced native forest, new plantations must not sacrifice existing forest.

**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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Native forests in NSW hold significant environmental, cultural, and heritage value, especially for threatened species and First Nations peoples. Logging operations degrade these values. The native forest logging industry and groups like Forestry Australia advocate for "Active Management" through thinning and logging to reduce wildfire risk. However, no empirical evidence supports this claim; in fact, thinning has been shown to increase fire severity in some cases, as seen in Victoria's 2009 and the 2019-2020 Black Summer wildfires.

"Forest Gardening," a logging practice promoted by industry advocates, removes substantial parts of forests under the guise of traditional land management, but there is no evidence it benefits biodiversity or "heals" the land. Some First Nations people have criticized it as a harmful modern practice. Claims that pre-colonial forests were open and park-like due to Indigenous land management, including burning, are not supported by historical or ecological evidence. Therefore, there is no scientific basis for practices like Forest Gardening or widespread thinning in native forest ecosystems. Logging, including Forest Gardening, undermines the environmental and cultural values of these forests.

**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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Intact native forests store significantly more carbon than logged and regenerated forests, and native forest logging generates substantial greenhouse gas emissions. Stopping native forest logging is a necessary strategy for Australia to meet its 2030 emissions reduction targets. A reduction in logging in Tasmania has already shown major carbon storage benefits, which can be reflected in state and national carbon accounts without needing carbon trading.

Additionally, intact native forests provide crucial biodiversity benefits, and the best way to preserve these values is to halt logging, including in NSW.