

ROBERT MCLAUGHLIN

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

A recent report commissioned by the World Wide Fund for Nature-Australia, provides strong evidence that now is the time to transition out of native forest logging in New South Wales. The 2019/20 bushfires burnt 64% of NSW's state forests, devastating wildlife, forest communities and the timber industry. These fires were an 'ecological bomb' that requires a review of business as usual approaches.

Our native forests are being lost. Along with the precious species that rely on them. It's time to talk about the future of forests in NSW and what a transition from native forest logging to sustainable plantations might look like.

For this reason, WWF-Australia engaged Frontier Economics to assess the impact of transitioning from native forest logging to plantations and the support needed to assist affected workers and regions.

Frontier Economics' report says the state's native forest logging business -has been shrinking for some time. and appears to offer poor financial returns..

The employment and economic contribution of the native forest business -has also fallen to a modest level. with an estimate that direct employment numbers are about 1070 across the State. It's estimated that ending logging of public native forests could cost the NSW government about \$302 million over 10 years for a structural adjustment package including worker redundancies and retraining, buy-backs of wood supply contracts, and support for diversifying regional economies. However, it's likely the positive impacts to the NSW budget would readily outweigh the costs of these measures including avoiding the large payments that have been made to the sector and FCNSW over recent years.

The government could also expect increased dividend revenue from Forestry Corporation once it was freed from the loss-making part of the business.

Danny Price, Managing Director of Frontier Economics said:

-NSW has a real chance to demonstrate strong leadership in removing the taxpayer burden of native forest logging and realising the carbon abatement opportunity and other benefits of stopping native logging."

-With the right support, workers could transition into jobs with more long term security and that would benefit the regions..

According to the report, displaced native forestry workers would likely find alternative employment in management of protected forest areas, recreation and tourism, plantation-based forestry work, fire and invasive species management and the management of carbon and biodiversity credits.

-The forestry-to-plantations transition in NSW is inevitable, necessary, and overdue,. said WWF-Australia chief conservation officer Rachel Lowry.

-Victoria and Western Australia have made commitments to transition out of native forest logging / it's time for NSW to do the same."

Public submission

-It would support the government's ambition to cut emissions by 50% by 2030, double koala numbers by 2050, handback more lands to Indigenous communities, grow nature-based tourism in the regions, and protect and enhance natural capital."

-This report was not commissioned to ignite or exacerbate 'forestry wars'."

-Instead, it's hoped it can prompt critical discussions, ideally led by the NSW Government."

-WWF-Australia calls for a just transition from forestry-to-plantations, that engages industry, along with climate scientists and eminent ecologists."

I ask you to act to save what old growth forests we have left.