

Public submission

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Submission to Support the Ending of NSW Native Forest Logging

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to put my personal comments forward for your consideration.

I have long been an opponent of the logging of Australia's increasingly denuded native forests – together with other uncontrolled land clearing – which conjointly contribute to unsustainable habitat loss for Australia's unique but increasingly threatened animal species.

More than ever, as we face the intensifying impacts of accelerating global heating and climate change, further exacerbated by an environmental crisis and the incursions of invasive pest species, native forest logging cannot be permitted to continue.'

In the face of these crises the core and eternal value of our native forests comes from their critical role in carbon storage, providing a clean and reliable water supply, providing critical habitat, recreation and spiritual connection.

Illegal logging practices, endangered species habitat destruction and totally inadequate pre-logging wildlife surveys have become the norm for Forestry Corporation. Under current rules, the volume of logs taken is considered more important than endangered species. This must stop now.

So, I fully support an immediate end to native forest logging and a future industry based on sustainable plantations.

Summary comments in respect of the specific issues raised

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

Logging in native forests is not sustainable, and current levels of logging are not sustainable and so result in the removal of protections for key habitat, and hence its damaging loss to environmental sustainability

Logging native forests removes the older trees, removing hollows and other habitat for forest wildlife, such as the Koala and the Great Glider.

Continued logging will likely contribute greatly to the extinction of forest dependent wildlife.

The catastrophic impacts of the 2019/20 fires have made this situation much more urgent and serious.

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

Forests are vital refuges for many threatened species that rely for life and survival on mature, intact forests

Forests provide important services for the environment and regional communities, such as:

- Water quality and flow regulation, important for water quality, fishing and tourism.
- Recreational values for locals and visitors.
- Cultural and spiritual significance, especially for indigenous communities.
- Habitat connectivity, supporting biodiversity and ecosystem health.

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

There is no longer any need to log public native forests to build houses.

Properly planned and managed plantations (on previously cleared land can supply our high quality and composite timber products

Shifting to plantation timber reduces pressure on native forests, supporting sustainable industry practices.

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

Hardwood and softwood plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production.

Investment in hardwood plantation on already cleared land would supply timber products into the future

Shifting to higher-value plantations can better meet timber needs.

Ending public forest subsidies would boost sustainable timber products.

Ending public forest subsidies would boost sustainable timber production on private lands.

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:

Healthy native forests provide essential water resources.

Protecting and restoring State Forests will increase the economic value through tourism, carbon storage, job creation and recreational opportunities.

The Forestry Corporation is currently financially unsustainable, relying on government support and yielding less timber compared to managed plantations.

Diverse forest management, particularly Aboriginal models, can enhance the cultural and social value of forests.

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

Logging in native forests releases large amounts of carbon, contributing to climate change.

Ending logging allows forests to recover, helping them store more carbon and support climate goals.

Healthy forests are essential for reducing the impacts of climate change like wildfires and drought.

By stopping logging, forests can play a large role in mitigating climate risks and supporting opportunities in carbon markets.

Conclusion

Self-evidently, the benefits of ending all forest logging in New South Wales – particularly in conjunction with a comprehensive reforestation plan to repair and the cumulative past damage, regenerated dilapidated ecosystems and their essential habitat values, and strengthen our mitigation strategies against global heating and the intensification of climate change – infinitely far outweigh the final transitional investments in plantation timbers to meet our current and future needs.

Rupert Macgregor

9th October 2024