

Public submission

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Ryde - Hunter's Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society

Member of Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W.

Submission to Independent Forestry Panel

The Ryde – Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society is a local environment group established over 55 years ago.

The aims and objectives of the Society include-

- Respect for the land and its flora and fauna and original custodians:
- The education of the membership and the community, particularly in the local area, in nature conservation and protection of the environment.
- The promotion of ecologically sustainable land use and development at the local, state, national and international levels.
- Advocating measures at the local, state, national and international level necessary to safeguard the environment from all forms of pollution to ensure, clean air, clean water and a healthy environment and to address climate change.

Native forests are crucial to the survival of our native species but also to the health of the environment and humans.

Native forests can play a significant role in reducing our carbon emissions and help the NSW government successfully reach its carbon emissions target. They are vital in dealing with the effects of climate change and the protection of our unique animal and plant species by generating rainfall, cooling the landscape and cleaning the air.

Unlogged, mature native forests have a multitude of benefits which include:

- playing a key role in pollination for not only within the confines of the forest but outside. This benefits the agricultural industry in the production of crops as well as ensuring the ongoing existence of native plants and trees
- providing hollows for animals that rely on them for nesting and food sources. There are 174 species in NSW that rely on hollows for dens and nests
- native state forests cover an area of 2 million hectares in NSW and contribute to the living conditions for many towns, from water quality in reservoirs, to greater tourism industry opportunities, and carbon storage and abatement
- being more resilient to the changing climate and catastrophic fires that are occurring as a consequence

- prevention of river bank erosion and improve the function and health of waterways, including streams and rivers
- providing a home to 269 nationally listed threatened species in NSW
- providing recreation and improved health outcomes to locals and visitors alike, while being a source of community pride and connection to place
- the on-going connection of First Nations people and communities to native forests and forest landscapes which are an integral part of cultural practice and knowledge
- reduces fire threat and intensity, erosion and water-way pollution, and the penetration of weeds and other invasive species

However, logging of native forests is now unsustainable. Estimations by the Forestry Corporation of the amount of harvestable timber are consistently over-estimated and the yield from these forests has declined by 40% since 2010.

For the year 2023 logging in native forests accounted for only 9% of the total log production. Half the logs taken from native forests in that year were turned into woodchip and exported. It is difficult to comprehend the justification for the logging of native forests for them to be turned into this product.

Plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production and the demand for native forests is declining rapidly.

The Forestry's Corporation's native forest hardwood division is operating at a loss of tens of millions of dollars. It also receives, in addition, tens of millions of dollars in regular equity injections. Surely the subsidisation of this non-competitive market should not be paid for by the people of NSW when the money could be much better spent on schemes to protect and restore biodiversity rather than destroying it and critical habitat for threatened species. Public native forests have a higher economic value when they are allowed to function naturally and without logging.

There are a number of benefits to the ending of native forest logging, particularly if the government wishes to achieve its carbon emissions targets, improve the health of the environment, protect vulnerable species and implement policies to deal with climate change. Ending the logging would be the equivalent of removing 840,000 cars from the road each year. It would allow previously logged areas to regain lost carbon. It would provide safe and healthy habitat for all species, particularly endangered ones. It would provide an opportunity for First Nations Ranger Programs to be implemented which have been hugely successful in managing the recovery and health of native forests elsewhere.

We therefore strongly urge the government to rapidly end all native forest logging in NSW and follow the lead of other states in making the health of the environment and our native species a priority.

Yours sincerely

Ryde – Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society