

SHARON COUTTS

Submission ID: 202210

Organisation: UTS

Location: New South Wales

Supporting materials uploaded: N/A

Submission date: 10/2/2024 9:35:35 PM

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

Logging in native forests is not sustainable:

- Logging native forests removes the older trees, removing hollows and other habitat for forest wildlife, such as the Koala and the Great Glider.
- Current levels of logging are not sustainable and result in the removal of protections for key habitat.
- Continued logging will likely contribute greatly to the extinction of forest dependent wildlife.
- The 2019/20 fires have made this situation much more urgent and serious

Topic 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 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.

Topic 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.

- Plantations can supply our high quality and composite timber products
- Shifting to plantation timber reduces pressure on native forests, supporting sustainable industry practices

Topic 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 production on private lands.

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

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.

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- 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.

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

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