

Public submission

WARWICK PEARSE

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Submission to the NSW Independent Forestry Panel

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment to the Panel. I believe the current operations in public NSW native forests are unsustainable for number of reasons, including those highlighted below.

The majority of NSW forests and woodlands in NSW have been destroyed or degraded.

It has been estimated by Ward et al.(2024) that since 1788 over half the forests and woodland in NSW have been destroyed. Of the remaining 25 million ha of forest and woodland nearly one third have been degraded. Forestry operations in eastern Australia have significantly contributed to the loss of biodiversity and have potentially impacted at least 150 species, (Ward et al. 2024). We have opportunity now to stem this tragic loss of native forests and woodlands.

Forestry operations destroy biodiversity

Logging operations are far more destructive of biodiversity and particular species than the proponents of logging will admit. Furthermore, environmental assessments of logging rarely consider the cumulative impacts of logging (Legge et al. 2024). Stopping logging in native forests would give many species a greater chance of avoiding extinction.

Forestry operations facilitate more intense bushfires

Scientific research has concluded that undisturbed tall native forests are much more resistant to catastrophic fires (Lindenmayer 2024). With climate change, catastrophic fire risk has increased so we should take steps to increase the fire resistance of native forests by not logging them.

Weak legislation and ineffectual enforcement

The regulation of forestry operations is weak. For example, Regional Forestry Agreement (RFAs) forestry operations are exempt from *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999*. This exemption sends a strong message that the native forestry industry and governments are antithetical to protecting biodiversity.

The negative and largely irreversible loss of native forests and biodiversity have been accelerated by global heating and related extreme weather events, such as more frequent droughts, catastrophic fires and flooding.

It is now more important than ever to conserve NSW public native forests to stem the loss of biodiversity and to help mitigate some of the threatening processes of climate change.

The transition away from logging public native forests to plantation forestry has a number of advantages including; increased opportunities for carbon sequestration, higher levels of protection for threatened species and biodiversity, more opportunities for the application of Aboriginal land management knowledge, employment in restoration and nature based recreation (Lindenmayer 2024).

Warwick Pearse,
30 September, 2024.

References

Legge S, Rumpff L, Garnett S T & J C Z Woinarski (2023) Loss of terrestrial biodiversity in Australia: Magnitude, causation, and response. *Science* 381 (6658) : 622-631.
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