

**Submission  
No 109**

## **SUSTAINABILITY OF ENERGY SUPPLY AND RESOURCES IN NSW**

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**Date Received:** 12 September 2019

## Submission to the Inquiry into the Sustainability of Energy Supply and Resources in NSW

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**Introduction:** I am a retired science teacher and rural land owner. I am actively involved in a number of community organisations including a local group called No Electricity From Forests. I am making a submission because I am distressed by the accelerated logging of our State forests in response to the worldwide trend of burning biomass for electricity production. Not only have the new NSW IFOAs opened up more areas for logging, but protection of wildlife, water courses, and soil health has been undermined. Increased logging is being driven by the classification of wood as 'carbon neutral' and 'renewable', thus attracting subsidies - a fallacy that does not count the CO<sub>2</sub> released when the wood is burned. Genuine renewables are the way of the future, offering economic and employment opportunities, but biomass should NOT be part of this mix.

Accepting the overwhelming evidence for climate change means reducing carbon emissions and expanding carbon sinks over the next 10-15 years, according to the IPCC. Businesses are increasingly planning for a low-carbon future by shifting resources from fossil-fuelled enterprises to those involving renewable energy. The public increasingly wants to purchase 'clean, green' energy, and wants government action on climate change. It makes economic sense to be shifting energy production from fossil fuels to renewables, and to build infrastructure (hubs, microgrids, etc.) in rural and regional communities. Not only will this reinvigorate local economies and provide employment, but may also attract families from overcrowded urban areas.

Clean renewable energy sources include solar, wind, pumped hydro, tidal and others – but NOT 'biomass' burning. Disastrously for the world's forests, burning wood for electricity has been labelled 'carbon neutral' and 'renewable' by many governments, including our own. This allows vested interests to claim 'carbon credits', thus driving deforestation. The claim that only 'waste' or 'residues' are used in furnaces is disingenuous – the harvesting of 'pulp logs' and 'low quality sawlogs' from NSW State forests has drastically increased with the rollover of the RFAs and the passing of new IFOAs.

The burning of wood for electricity emits even more CO<sub>2</sub> per megawatt hour than burning fossil fuels. Regenerating logged forests to recapture carbon takes decades - and the world does not have that time. Whole logs are already burned for 'renewable' electricity in NE NSW, and contracts have already been signed for Australian companies to provide Japan with wood pellets for their new wood-fired power station. The DPI claims that biomass from NSW forests can 'support the development of... energy generation systems, with no adverse impacts on the environment'. The IFOAs permit FCNSW to dramatically expand areas for logging, to log up to 60 ha at a time, to log in previously protected old growth forest, to ignore the presence of wildlife, and to log even closer to water courses.

Thus, we are seeing a dramatic increase of logging and the fragmentation of our forest ecosystems. The lure of biomass with its carbon credit rewards (and the prospect of FCNSW finally turning a profit) is driving deforestation at an unprecedented rate, at a time when we need to preserve forests

as carbon sinks. We are fast losing wildlife habitats, as well as the ability of healthy forests to create and store rainfall, contain erosion, mitigate fire risk, store carbon, regulate flooding, purify air and water, and protect water courses.

Regarding community health, our roads are deteriorating and more dangerous with increased truck volume, our properties are dust-caked, the daily noise is constant, and the employment is minimal. Instead of several small local mills, industrial logging involves huge expensive machinery and few workers. Regarding water security, our creeks have dried up, but regardless, FCNSW continues to heavily log the river catchment.

Burning biomass for electricity damages the environment and public health, is unsustainable, is based on miscalculation of emissions, concentrates economic benefit with a small pool of vested interests, uses public money, and does not supply as much employment as the rapidly expanding renewable industry. The NSW Government needs to foster expansion of genuine renewables, and act meaningfully to preserve our precious remaining forests by allowing them to grow to maturity.

Attached are relevant references, and photos of local FCNSW logging practice and a load of immature 'non sawlogs'.

## Research Websites

- **Where can I find out more about changes to NSW's logging laws?**  
[npansw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IFOA\\_BriefingNote\\_May18.pdf](https://npansw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IFOA_BriefingNote_May18.pdf)
- **Pulp logs will be used as biomass for energy generation.**  
[dpi.nsw.gov.au/forestry/north-coast-residues-project](https://dpi.nsw.gov.au/forestry/north-coast-residues-project)
- **'Residues' or 'waste' in Nth Coast forests can power 200 000 homes/annum.**  
[dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/media-centre/releases/2017/north-coast-forests-offer-untapped-bioenergy-opportunity](https://dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/media-centre/releases/2017/north-coast-forests-offer-untapped-bioenergy-opportunity)
- **DPI research aimed at establishing biomass hubs at Grafton, Kempsey and Bulahdelah.**  
[dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf/0006/747672/North-coast-residues-report.pdf](https://dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf/0006/747672/North-coast-residues-report.pdf)
- **Wood pellet fuel has been classified as renewable resource in Europe and Asia: Australia well-placed to provide 'wood waste' to this market.**  
[ausfpa.com.au/media-releases/finkel-review-paves-way-for-renewable-energy-from-wood-waste](https://ausfpa.com.au/media-releases/finkel-review-paves-way-for-renewable-energy-from-wood-waste)
- **Is wood 'carbon-neutral'?**  
[Reneweconomy.com.au/displacing-coal-with-wood-for-power-generation-will-worsen-climate-change](https://Reneweconomy.com.au/displacing-coal-with-wood-for-power-generation-will-worsen-climate-change)  
[e360.yale.edu/features/carbon-loop-hole-why-is-wood-burning-counted-as-green-energy](https://e360.yale.edu/features/carbon-loop-hole-why-is-wood-burning-counted-as-green-energy)
- **What do the politicians say?**  
**State and federal ministers endorse use of forest bio-products in transition to low-carbon economy.**  
[agriculture.gov.au/forestry/policies/ministerial-forestry-statement](https://agriculture.gov.au/forestry/policies/ministerial-forestry-statement)  
**Govt. promoting forest biomass as renewable energy resource.**  
[agriculture.gov.au/sitecollectiondocuments/forestry/australia's-forest-policies/fiac/transforming-australia's-forest-industry](https://agriculture.gov.au/sitecollectiondocuments/forestry/australia's-forest-policies/fiac/transforming-australia's-forest-industry)  
**NSW govt. approves whole trees to be burned for electricity.**  
[smh.com.au/environment/devastating-changes-allow-forests-to-be-burned-for-power](https://smh.com.au/environment/devastating-changes-allow-forests-to-be-burned-for-power)
- **Why burning wood to make electricity may not be a good choice for the environment**  
[abc.net.au/news/2018-11-20/why-burning-wood-for...](https://abc.net.au/news/2018-11-20/why-burning-wood-for...)
- **Australian Pellets to Japan and elsewhere**  
[timberbiz.com.au/Australia-japan-forest-products-trade-strengthened/](https://timberbiz.com.au/Australia-japan-forest-products-trade-strengthened/)  
[timberbiz.com.au/pellets-are-a-growth-opportunity-for-Australia](https://timberbiz.com.au/pellets-are-a-growth-opportunity-for-Australia)
- **Rollover of RFAs**  
[npansw.org/2019/01/17/lack-of-commonwealth-accountability-](https://npansw.org/2019/01/17/lack-of-commonwealth-accountability-)  
[npansw.org/2018/11/19/destructive-logging-laws-slammed-](https://npansw.org/2018/11/19/destructive-logging-laws-slammed-)



















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