

**Submission  
No 159**

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

**Name:** Ms Susie Header

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Submission from Susie Header

I live in the northern Rivers of NSW near one of the two electricity generators in north-east NSW that burn wood, the Condong Co- Generation Plant. I have first hand experience with logging operations on land adjoining mine where koala habitat has been destroyed and the water catchments ruined due to sediment pollution from logging and the road infrastructure built for logging.

I live with an off grid solar power system which is truly sustainable and renewable and in our country with the abundance of sun we should all be powered by solar not cutting trees down to burn to provide energy.

The 2 generators on the North Coast were originally designed to run on waste from the burning of sugar cane Bagasse, and then were converted to burn other waste from sugar cane and also Camphor Laurel, but that was unsuccessful, and also destroyed habitat and caused destruction to riparian zones. These generators are now consuming 140,000 tonnes of wood per year and selling the electricity produced as supposed 'GreenPower'.

The Carbon Dioxide emissions from these facilities are not counted toward any national targets or limits, because 'biomass' is considered to be carbon neutral. These facilities get Renewable Energy Credits for the wood that they burn.

More than 800 climate scientists and ecologists have written to various international agencies, stating that the burning of woody biomass should be counted towards our emissions, because the lag time in the landscape in re-capturing the carbon can be decades. And regarding the plantations on the north coast most are being converted to pasture so the carbon will never be recaptured. And in fact the methane emissions from the animals grazing will only increase our emissions.

The logging trucks driving on our narrow and winding country roads are causing a significant risk of danger and impacts our local communities. I myself have had a very near miss with a logging truck who was over the double lines and suddenly appeared on a sharp bend. Some of these local roads have dangerous potholes as well. And I have seen these logging trucks driving at the same time that the school buses run and when children are walking along the road after getting off a school bus.

Once the failed plantations have all been burned there will also be pressure from the company to get access to trees from our State Forests. This is just not sustainable.

The Department of Primary Industry ( DPI ) has already identified hundreds of thousands of tonnes of wood per annum that could come from forests on private land and also from State Forests for burning. In fact the DPI have been promoting the logging of forests on private land in local papers.

Industries like this are only driving deforestation and the clear-felling of our forests. And our forests are home to our iconic koalas and other vulnerable species who are dependent on these forests for their homes and food.

In Eden on the South Coast the woodchipping industry has converted multi-age diverse forests into largely single age regrowth with little to no complexity or habitat value. Many animal species, such as the koala, have almost disappeared as a result. We just can't let the koala go extinct on our watch and that is exactly where koalas are headed if we don't protect their habitat. I personally have had logging of Eucalypt Forest happening in koala habitat on both sides of me, and I have had koalas fleeing from the logging onto my property.

The noise of the logging is relentless and goes all day, and there is no way that koalas and other wildlife can co-exist with it. In fact with koalas if they survive the trees coming down around them they will often succumb to life-threatening Chlamydia due to the stress.

The Department of Primary Industries and the Forestry Corporation of NSW have been driving the logging intensification now enshrined in the new Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals.

Intensification of logging in State Forests leads to declines in water yield which in turn increases the fire risk, and also leads to biodiversity loss, and declines in stored carbon. Our forests are our only real defence against climate change.

Now more than ever with the climate crisis and species extinction we should be protecting our forests, which in turn protect our water catchments, shelter our unique plants and animals, store carbon and protect against drought. Our forests create the oxygen we breath and the water we drink, and are essential to our unique wildlife. We can not afford to lose any more forests, they must be protected into the future if we want to have a future. And they certainly shouldn't be cut down just to go up in smoke.

The cutting down, destruction and burning of our forests to create electricity is not sustainable, it is not readily renewable, it is certainly not green, it is not in the best interests of our climate, our wildlife or our environment and it is also not wanted.