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## INQUIRY INTO THE LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE OF THE TIMBER AND FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

Additional material tabled at the Coffs Harbour hearing April 29, 2022

### A. Further comments on matters raised in the CVCC's original submission:

#### 1. Ending Public Native Forest Logging in NSW

In its original submission the Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition (CVCC) called for an end to public native forest logging. Two of the reasons for this call related to biodiversity and climate change. Healthy native forests are essential because of their ecological value at a time when we are facing an accelerating biodiversity crisis. They are also vitally important in our efforts to mitigate climate change. Logging these important publicly-owned natural resources is unsustainable now – let alone in the long term – because of the damage it causes.

Having recognised this problem in their states, Victoria and Western Australia have decided to phase out native forestry logging. While their decisions were influenced by science, strong community campaigns eventually encouraged them to act. In NSW there is increasing community support for our government to take this action and the CVCC hopes that the NSW Government will follow their example and phase out logging our public forests. Obviously a comprehensive transition plan for the current public forests industry will need to be developed as the plantation-based industry is expanded. Expansion of the plantations must only be on land that is currently cleared.

Public native forest logging is also economically unsustainable. The Forestry Corporation continues to lose money each year with a loss of \$20 million last year. A recent study by ANU's Professor Andrew Macintosh and Frontier Economics found that ceasing native forestry logging in the south of NSW could produce over the period 2022-2041 a net economic benefit of about \$60 million while reducing net greenhouse emissions by about 1 million tonnes per year.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2. "Big Picture" Matters for the Committee's Consideration

What is happening across the broader NSW landscape also needs to be taken into consideration when considering the future of our public native forests.

i) The NSW State of the Environment 2021 Report, released in mid-February this year highlights how dire the situation is for the natural world in this state and indicates that further deterioration is very likely. Examples of the problems highlighted include the fact that land clearing has increased three fold in the

<sup>1</sup> "\$20m loss: native forest logging last year cost NSW taxpayers \$441 per hectare" – Lucy Cormack and Nick O'Malley, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 March, 2022. <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/20m-loss-native-forest-logging-last-year-cost-nsw-taxpayers-441-per-hectare-20220314-p5a4g1.html>

last decade, 62% of the state is now under threat from too much fire and, a further 18 species are under threat of extinction since the 2018 report with that list now totalling 1,043 species.<sup>2</sup>

ii) Following the North Coast floods there has been comment about the role catchment degradation played in the disaster that unfolded around Lismore and further north. In a North Coast Environment Council media release of 22 March 2022 Vice-President Susie Russell welcomed the NSW Government's independent flood inquiry but commented, "It shouldn't need much investigation to reveal that the catastrophic north coast floods resulted from the compounding influences of: decades of logging and clearing in the upper catchment and along the gullies, creeks and rivers; rising greenhouse emissions leading to rising global temperatures, particularly ocean temperatures and thus massive evaporation leading to the 'rain bomb' event; and the failure of engineering solutions." She added that there was a need for a widespread well-funded Total Catchment Management plan that stops the ongoing destruction and begins a serious program of catchment repair or the disaster would be repeated.

**The CVCC believes that public forests should not be considered in isolation from the big picture and the widespread degradation in our state's natural world. Our public forests are part of that big picture.**

## **B. Additional Documents attached for the Committee's Consideration**

1. Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition letter (14 April 2022) to Ms Jacqueline Moore, a/Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority on concerns about the Draft Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2022. CVCC concerns are related to loopholes which would allow the destruction of our native forests for electricity generation.
2. Letter from John Edwards, Clarence Environment Centre (CEC), to the Minister for Forests about the CEC's Southgate State Forest Assessment (25 March, 2022) which highlighted the lack of management, historical and current, in this State Forest not far from Grafton. This is a further example to evidence the Committee has already received about the Forest Corporation's ongoing shortcomings in our state forests.
3. Copy of research paper "Logging elevated the probability of high-severity fire in the 2019-20 Australian forest fires" - David B. Lindenmayer *et al.*, Nature Ecology & Evolution

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<sup>2</sup> "Land clearing in NSW tripled over past decade, State of the Environment Report reveals" – Lisa Cox. The Guardian, 17 February, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/feb/17/land-clearing-in-nsw-triples-over-past-decade-state-of-the-environment-2021-report-reveals>