

**Submission
No 43**

**INQUIRY INTO PROVISIONS OF THE FORESTRY
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018**

Name: Ms Megan James

Date Received: 30 May 2018

Dear Committee members

I am a resident in the North Coast of NSW, a landowner, a taxpayer and a ratepayer. I am not aligned with any political party and I vote. I live here because of the environment and the wildlife. I have seen the decline of many species in the 40 years that I have lived in the region. I am very worried about the erosion of environmental protections which will result from the provisions of the Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I am **STRONGLY OPPOSED** to the Bill which seeks to transfer regulation powers of private native forestry from the EPA to the Local Land Services and Minister for Lands and Forestry. I also consider it to be entirely inappropriate that the Minister for Lands and Forestry should prepare Codes of Practice for timber harvesting on private property given that the priority and prime responsibility of the Minister is to obtain timber from private land to make up for public shortfalls. Further, I am concerned that the requirements that Codes of Practice include provisions relating to "biodiversity conservation" is an inadequate basis on which to ensure the protection of threatened species and ecosystems. Codes of Practice are self-regulated and unenforceable in reality, as you know. Australia has the worst rate of species extinction in the world, in circumstances where we are currently in the 6th greatest global-wide extinction event in the history of the planet Earth. This is a crisis. A Code of Practice does not reflect the severity of this crisis. Threatened species, waterways and habitat must be protected by enforceable laws with severe penalties. This is the ultimate land use conflict – but unlike the land use conflicts between human beings, wildlife does not have a voice and cannot fight for its own right to the land and the environment. The purpose of the Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 is clearly to enable the progression of the draft Coastal IFOA to allow the opening up of the remaining native forests in NSW for logging, and erode the barriers to the industry posed by environmental values. The rhetoric around the draft IFOA speaks of striking a 'better balance' between environmental values and the need for wood supply. Yet the balance is already tipped in favour of industry and the impact upon native forests has already been extreme, as evidenced by the collapse of the North Coast koala population by 50% in the last 20 years, not to mention many other species which are becoming increasingly rare and vulnerable. This legislation together with the draft Coastal IFOA aims to tip the balance even further in favour of industry and against the environment and the wildlife that inhabits it. The legislation also erodes transparency and accountability provisions and the capacity for proper public scrutiny to occur in relation to e.g. proposed Codes of Conduct. This is an incredibly irresponsible approach in my view and spells disaster for both the sustainability of the forests and of the timber industry into the future. I strongly **OPPOSE** and **OBJECT** to this Bill.