

**Submission
No 46**

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

Name: Mr Peter & Meg Nielsen

Date Received: 30 May 2018

Dear Committee members

We are primary producers, food producers on the North Coast of NSW, and members of the National Party. We have observed the decline of many species in recent years and are very worried about the erosion of environmental protections that will result from the provisions of the Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.

We are opposed to the Bill which proposes transfer of regulation powers of private native forestry from the EPA to the Local Land Services and Minister for Lands and Forestry. This reduces our valuable forests and wildlife habitat so important to our unique wildlife and koala habitat to a resource to be harvested.

We 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, we are 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. Australia has over 1000 known endangered species and we expect our government to do everything possible to protect our biodiversity.

A Code of Practice does not reflect the severity of this crisis and this is certainly a crisis. Old growth trees with hollows, habitat and fodder trees, threatened species, waterways and habitat must be protected by enforceable laws with severe penalties.

It is clear that the purpose of the Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 is to enable the progression of the draft Coastal IFOA and allow the opening up of the remaining native forests in NSW which were previously protected, for logging. This will remove the restrictions to the timber industry posed by environmental values. The draft IFOA speaks of striking a "better balance" between environmental values and the need for timber supply. However, the balance is already tipped very much in favour of industry and the impact upon our public native forests has already been very much a concern, with forest dieback from lantana infestation, exacerbated by frequent breaches, and reflected in the 50% collapse in the last 20 years of the North Coast koala population with many wildlife & plant species becoming increasingly rare and vulnerable.

It appears that this legislation coupled with the draft Coastal IFOA is aimed at favouring even further the interests of the timber industry and setting aside the important public asset of our forests for carbon storage which is so essential at this time with climate destabilisation so obvious and our commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement. The legislation also erodes transparency and accountability provisions and the capacity for proper public scrutiny to occur in relation to proposed Codes of Conduct.

We consider these changes to be disastrous for both the sustainability of our forests and of the timber industry into the future.
We oppose this Bill.

Sincerely,

Peter & Meg Nielsen