

**Supplementary
Submission
No 46a**

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

Name: Mr Peter & Meg Nielsen

Date Received: 31 May 2018

Further to our submission: Not sure how appropriate this is but I believe it is relevant & needs to be heard.

Dear Committee Members,

Peter and I did a tour of the Richmond Ranges, here on the North Coast earlier this month & we were appalled by the sheer magnitude of the damage caused by irresponsible logging practices, breaches of regulation and general lack of care or understanding of the forest eco-system by the loggers.

We would like Members to see for themselves the state in which our public state forests are being left. It is irresponsible and unsustainable...and an abuse of their privilege. Our koalas and unique wildlife are being put at risk from loss of habitat at a frightening rate and the public care.

We are very concerned by the lack of rehabilitation after logging. It seems to be a culture of 'Smash & Grab': move in with machinery too large to responsibly carry out selective logging, take what they want, trash the rest and move on.

We observed cases of severe damage to old growth habitat trees, which forestry are supposed to protect and retain for koalas and other wildlife, apparently by bulldozers or other heavy machinery. Damage to riparian buffer zones and headwaters is of serious concern. Current buffer zones of 10 metres are being ignored and we believe the distances need to be increased to say 30 metres to encourage protection of headwaters, yet we understand that the draft IFOA buffer zones are to be reduced to 5 metres. This is unwise, effecting everyone downstream, causing silting & damage of water quality of our creeks & rivers for agriculture & irrigation. Not to mention the loss of native fish species, allowing carp to prosper.

We observed vast areas swathed in thick lantana growth interspersed by dying eucalypt trees, where areas had been cleared rather than selective logging practiced. Seedling trees and young trees have no hope of establishing under rampant lantana so these forests have no hope of recovery without serious and urgent intervention and restoration work. Nor are koala & wildlife able to move around & access the trees.

You may have heard of Bell Miner Affected Dieback or BMAD. (It should more accurately be called Lantana Affected Dieback) Unfortunately Lantana provides favourable habitat for Bell Miner birds and indeed they were the only wildlife we saw or heard in these areas. Although native, these birds are very aggressive and drive off other species of birds and mammals too. Bell Miners' favourite food is the sugary coating of the sap sucking psyllid which attacks the eucalypt leaves. Unfortunately because they only eat the sugary coating, this allows the proliferation of the sap-sucking psyllids and with no other predators left around to control them, this causes the defoliation, sickening and eventual death of the eucalypts and so the forest.

We note the forest industry's indignant response to the Koala Strategy : 'Locking Up More NSW Forests Won't Help Koalas'. We read their media release with some amazement!
Certainly further logging of these forests won't help koalas!

Our public state forests are being trashed and our already vulnerable wildlife are in danger of extinction. We have seen the results for ourselves, and what happens when we allow forestry to police themselves in our public state forests.

The time has come to appreciate just how important and valuable our unique native forests and wildlife are. They hold great appeal for tourists, and especially international tourists. This is where the true value of our forests is to be found ... in tourism. Not continuing with this unsustainable destruction of our native forests. Trees that are often wasted to feed mill power systems which would be so much better supplied by solar systems.

This is a highly subsidised industry. There are far more jobs, constructive & valuable jobs, to be created in EcoTourism and Forest tours, rather than logging our native forests. This is a perfect opportunity to create many jobs, retraining and using forestry workers to clear lantana, rehabilitate the forests and plant new trees. Now that would be innovative!

Loggers are now extracting trees with a diameter of only 30cm which is in itself unsustainable and of course compromises the health & recovery of the forest.

Worth noting too that young trees exude a repellent chemical as a self defence mechanism so are not acceptable to koalas as a food source.

Trees & older trees in particular are a very efficient carbon sinks. Young trees less so. Part of our contribution to the Paris Agreement is maintaining & enhancing our forests to mitigate carbon emissions.

We note also that the Queen has a pet Commonwealth Canopy project to preserve our forests, forming a network across the planet. How valuable to invest some of our wonderful forests as part of that project.

We need to look at better ways of doing business. The Earth and its atmosphere is finite...so are our resources...& must not be squandered. This is such an important time.

Is it time for a moratorium on logging in our Public State Forests? I don't think a token band aid system like the Koala Strategy in its current form will satisfy the public.

Yours Sincerely
Meg Nielsen