

**Submission
No 117**

**INQUIRY INTO PROVISIONS OF THE RIGHT TO FARM
BILL 2019**

Organisation: Nambucca Valley Conservation Association Inc.

Date Received: 30 September 2019



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Parliamentary Inquiry into the Right to Farm Bill

Submitted as attachment to online submission form

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/lodge-a-submission.aspx?pk=2553>

30 September 2019

Dear Committee

RE: Submission regarding the Right to Farm Bill

The Nambucca Valley Conservation Association Inc (NVCA) is a voluntary community group which has operated on the NSW mid north coast for over 30 years and which maintains a long-standing and strong interest in forest management, in particular in public native forests in the north east region of NSW.

We are extremely alarmed by the inclusion of forestry as an agricultural activity and in particular the inclusion of public forests (State Forests) within the Bill under the definition of 'Enclosed Lands'.

As volunteers, our members have undertaken pre and post harvest logging audits in State Forests for over 25 years. We recognise that these forests belong to the people of NSW and as such we have a right to observe, comment and question their management. Over the years NVCA has witnessed multiple breaches of the logging rules which we have brought to the regulator's attention. We do this because we believe strongly in the public good and the future of our native forests for the multiple values they contain such as biodiversity, stream stabilisation, climate amelioration and a living resource for nature based tourism – not just commercial timber values. And we do this peacefully and legally without any assault or damage to person or property and have promoted this ethos endlessly.

In this time of climate emergency and the escalating extinction crisis, we see this bill as an unprecedented and totally unacceptable assault on our civil rights, aimed at stopping any future actions to protect our public lands or indeed even providing more information about them to authorities from our citizen science.

We do not accept that native forests are a form of agriculture under the definition as they have not been planted. Including State Forests in this Bill is nothing more than a covert attack on the rights to peacefully protest or even audit forestry operations on public lands. If this bill passes it will mean that any presence or perceived hinderance, even kilometres away from a logging operation on public lands, could attract a fine of up to \$22,000 or imprisonment for 3 years! These are our forests managed by a corporate entity of the State Government on behalf of the people of NSW, so to wilfully exclude from and punish citizens for taking a genuine and peaceful interest in the management and use of our natural asset is reprehensible.

We strongly oppose the inclusion of public land in particular State Forests in this Bill.

Sincerely

Paula Flack, President