

**Submission
No 14**

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

Name: Mr Les Mitchell

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I make this submission on the basis of my knowledge of native forests in the Port Macquarie Hastings LGA. Logging of native forests in NSW should be gradually phased out as plantations come on stream. I believe that native forest logging has been unsustainable since industrial scale logging commenced after the 2nd World War. While large areas of State Forest have been transferred to National Parks estate in the last 30 years, much of the foothill forest in particular (eg Kerewong SF, Comboyne SF, Lorne SF, Bellangry SF, Bril Bril SF to name a few on mid north coast) remains under timber harvesting. Besides the hardwood forest being logged the so-called protected rainforest patches (Special Management Zones) within the harvesting zones are being impacted by adjacent logging. I have experienced that in Comboyne SF where in early 2020 NSW Forestry Corporation logged right to the boundaries of protected rainforest and in places encroached on the rainforest. EPA investigated and found that FC had not encroached over the "mapped" boundary of the protected rainforest, thus indicating the inaccuracy of the mapping of the Special Management Zones. Ideally they should be protected in entire catchments to reduce edge effects of adjacent logging. Logging so close to these rainforest patches makes them more prone to fire damage in the event of wildfires, as they are more exposed as a result of adjacent logging. I have observed this effect on the rainforests in State Forest along the Hastings Forest Way west of Wauchope following the intense fires of November 2019.

The new CIFOA now allows 45 hectare coupes of intensive harvesting and the subsequent promotion of monoculture blackbutt forests to be established in these harvested areas. Industrial logging causes enormous disturbance to the soil profile and the loss of carbon which is not adequately addressed in environmental assessments of logging operations.

FC claims that all their forest regrows after harvesting and is therefore sustainable. But for what? ..At a time when it is critical that we should be sequestering carbon dioxide, intensive logging results in a massive release of CO₂ and then a slow uptake of that CO₂ over decades. Leaving semi mature and mature forest intact (proforestation) is the most optimal way of sequestering carbon. The planet does not have time to wait until forests regrow after harvesting.

Plantations on cleared land not used for food production should have been established in a large way years ago and I appreciate it will take time to replace the products from current native forest logging. I accept that the long term use of timber products can be a sustainable use of this natural resource.

I would also like to take the opportunity to express my strong opposition to any logs from native forest being burnt for electricity. The proposal to convert the Redbank Power station in the Upper Hunter to burn biomass for electricity is very concerning and I fear that it will place even more pressure on our native forests.

Thank you for considering my submission