

Submission
No 88

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

To Whom it May Concern,

I live in the Northern Rivers, historically one of the most severely cleared areas in NSW. This was in fact the reason for the Terania Creek protest that began in 1979, and resulted in the Wran government's decision to halt logging there, and in rainforests generally. As a stark statistic, less than 1% of the original Big Scrub forest remains intact to this day, and parts of that burnt in the Black Summer fires in 2019/2020 fire season.

I was driving back from a road trip down south in September 2019 when the Bees Nest fire started on the Dorrigo plateau, the area of highest average rainfall in all of NSW. You may recall that that fire burnt for months. You may recall that fires ravaged out of control all around Australia, for over 6 months.

I certainly do.

I was living on the coast at the time near Byron Bay and there was no escape from the smoke - the south, to the north, to the west, we were surrounded by fires for months.

When the Big Scrub was originally felled - cleared for selection because of an outstanding government decision called the Robertson selection act - one local noted that the rain, which was a feature of the Big Scrub area - significantly reduced (source: Bundjalung Jugun: Bundjalung Country, by Jennifer Hoff) .

Scientific research more recently has decisively proven that removing forests decreases rainfall - and I remember learning in my geography class in 1986 (NSW curriculum) that rainforests draw water from the atmosphere, transpire it back into the atmosphere, and cause localised rain, which is then caught in catchments and fed into our river systems and trickles down through the ground to recharge our groundwater... and now we know that this affect is not just limited to rainforests, but occurs in all forests.

And then there is the issue of biodiversity, of which we have lost so much already. I have quoted a source above that has gathered primary sources from my area from the point of European invasion into Bundjalung lands. I suggest you read the book, to educate yourself about what the world up here was like, before the chains and axes created the piles of tree carcasses (valuable rainforest timber! Imagine the industry we could have had, selectively logging cabinet timbers!) that were then razed to ashes and filled the air with so much smoke and a terrible, terrible silence. The accounts of the forest, before this occurred, are startling and achingly saddening in their profundity. Extinction really is forever.

Environmentalists of all persuasions have been trying to make governments see sense for decades. The science is clear as a river that runs through a pristine forest. (Come and see our Wilson River! It's a mud silted, sullied, weed-infested, unswimmable horror. We used to be able to sail ferries and boats up this river.) Forests make water. Forests that are logged are more susceptible to burning. Forests create cleaner, more resilient catchments. Forests filter our water. Forests help slow down surface water and prevent flooding (says I from the most flooded town in Australia). Forests provide habitat for millions, if not billions of life forms that are vital to life on Earth.

I don't have scientific credentials.

I do have rare visits on our property from critically endangered glossy black cockatoos. I don't have visits from koalas, which should be heavily populating in this area.

Our wildlife is in crisis. Our forests are in crisis. Our climate is in crisis. We need intact forests. We need forests restored, as well as protected. We need our forests.

Please consider my thoughts.