

**Submission
No 103**

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

Name: Ms Naomi Shine

Date Received: 28 May 2021

Long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry

Submission.

When I visit native forest, I'm looking for invasive weeds, endemic flora, signs of wildlife and feral animals. I'm looking for gaps in the canopy, vines, lantana and ways to restore native forests to healthy, intact ecosystems that provide ecosystem services and ameliorate climate destabilisation. We can't afford further degradation of our remaining areas of forest.

I went out with a small group to Carwong SF after the bushfires of 2019 to look for Koalas, to see what had happened in their habitat. The sawmill at Rappville was still burning. We found two perished Koalas and much of the scorched leaf dropping, with little hope of Koala feed leaf being retained on the trees. We found a large male who had died after escaping the main fire by sheltering near a dam, he would have died of heat exhaustion not long after. Not far off we found a female who had died in the fire. They had no chance. The forest was eerily quiet, the birds had still not returned, there were no lizards. I saw two large grey kangaroos who had been browsing in the creek bed on some small emerging bladey grass leaves. They looked in poor condition.

I visited Myrtle State Forest regularly in 2020, keen to protect the remaining habitat of the Banyabba Koala population for Koalas that survived the fires. Our group found plenty of fresh Koala evidence, got to know the forest enough to recommend that the habitat clumps / wildlife exclusion zones identified by Forestry Corporation were misplaced and appeared to set aside very low value areas rather than areas with genuine habitat and recruitment trees.

Visiting Doubleduke State Forest recently, the road passed through an intermittent wetland and it was brimming, the road was impassable. I saw the most enormous tadpoles that I have ever seen. The citizen scientist in me was full of questions and we hadn't even made it though to the potential Koala habitat forest type!

I recommend to this inquiry

- **to end to public native forest logging.**
- **Immediate expansion of the plantation estate, with a goal of a 100% plantation-based timber industry.**
- **Government transition plans for communities impacted by transition out of native forest logging.**
- **Transfer of the most ecologically significant state forests into the national parks estate.**

I would like to support and recommend the amazing tome of a submission from Dailan Pugh OAM as well as other experienced forest watchers such as Jim Morrison.

There is much more value in preserving and learning from our forests, than there is continuing to degrade them.

The following points were researched by the Nature Conservation Council of NSW and I heartily support their ideas.

- Rules that regulate Forestry Corporation NSW's (FCNSW) logging operations, the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (CIFOAs), were not developed to account for the scale or severity of the fires experienced during the Black Summer bushfires.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed amended rules for logging to provide additional protections immediately following the fires, but FCNSW has abandoned these additional protections and returned to logging under the previous rules (CIFOAs). This will spell disaster for our forests and wildlife.
- The patches of unburnt or lightly burnt forests that are threatened by logging are critical, often tiny, refuges for wildlife
 - An EPA review released in September 2020 found: *“Fauna populations surviving in fire refuges in state forests are at risk of elimination by timber harvesting under the normal CIFOA which could prevent recovery, and cause catastrophic population decline in species such as the Koala, Greater Glider and Yellow-bellied Glider.”*ⁱ
- 1.8 million hectares of habitat and feed trees were destroyed during the fires.ⁱⁱ The forest which remains must be protected.

Native forest logging makes no economic sense

- The native forestry (hardwood) division of FCNSW is loss-making. The high cost, low return of hardwood harvesting is only offset by FCNSW's softwood plantations, which generate most of the corporation's annual earnings.ⁱⁱⁱ
- FCNSW's revenue is set to decline \$100 million, or 25 per cent, from next financial year, with predicted losses of about \$15 million a year from 2022 to 2024.ⁱⁱⁱ FCNSW is a government owned corporation, so the NSW Government is ultimately liable for keeping it afloat. This means taxpayers are subsidising the destruction of our native forests and paying to drive species to extinction. This is absurd.
- To stay viable, FCNSW has adopted more intensive logging, encroaching even closer to sensitive areas such as waterways. This puts more pressure on our environment than ever.

Ending native forest logging does not mean job losses

- Forestry industry job losses are avoidable. Right now we export low value products like wood chips, and import high value products like engineered timber. A plantation based industry with more processing in Australia could greatly increase regional forestry jobs.
- The plantation industry in NSW employs 11,600 people. Only 800 people are currently employed in native forestry.
 - There are also jobs in managing forests for tourism, recreation, and carbon storage.

Increasing tourism in regions with state forests is a huge economic opportunity

- A recent study by the University of Newcastle found that turning state forests on the north coast of NSW into a Great Koala National Park would create nearly 10,000 full time jobs and increase total economic output for the region by \$1.18 billion over 15 years^{iv}.
- Many other great opportunities exist across the state to transform state forests into tourist attractions.
- This could include the creation and maintenance of new walking tracks, horse-riding trails, boardwalks, lookouts, campgrounds with amenities and scenic driving routes, bringing in revenue for forest management and local communities.

Our forests are a crucial carbon sink – they must be protected to reduce climate pollution

- As forests age, they store more and more carbon in their roots and trunks. Unlogged forests continue to do this work for free. Destroying forests releases carbon that has been stored over the lifetime of the tree, contributing to climate change.

Our public native forests are worth more standing. It's time to put an end to destructive logging of state forests and transition to a sustainable, plantation-based timber industry.

i [https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/-/media/epa/corporate-site/resources/forestry/review-of-cifoa-mitigation-conditions-for-timber-harvesting-in-burnt](https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/-/media/epa/corporate-site/resources/forestry/review-of-cifoa-mitigation-conditions-for-timber-harvesting-in-burnt-landscapes.pdf?la=en&hash=6360E080DB80E7BEF935A1A4A6BDDAB46BBFD0A7)

landscapes.pdf?la=en&hash=6360E080DB80E7BEF935A1A4A6BDDAB46BBFD0A7, p. 26

ii Collins, L, Bradstock, R, Clare, H, Clarke, M, Nolan, R and Penman, T. 2021. The 2019/2020 mega-fires exposed Australian ecosystems to an unprecedented extent of high-severity fire', Environmental Research Letters, 16:4, available <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/abeb9e>

iii <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/sustainability/forestry-corp-facing-massive-revenue-drop-after-record-bushfire-season-20210121-p56vxa.html>

iv <https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7108978/plan-to-create-australias-first-national-koala-park/>