

Submission
No 105

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

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Native forest logging must be stopped. Native forests are a natural carbon sinkhole. Climate change is undeniable and everything must be done to slow down climate change. We need forests to soak up the extra carbon.

Many of our unique fauna is in the process of extinction. Our koalas are becoming a threatened species. We must stop all clearing of all habitat now.

Biodiversity is being harmed. This is essential for our health and the health of the planet.

There can be sustainable forestry, using existing plantation estates. Over the years countless governments have been propping up the timber industry. It is time to transition those workers into more sustainable jobs. It is evident in Tasmania that ecotourism is huge and they can make use of the intact forests for tourism. Nature tourism is huge all around the world. Once it's chopped down, it's too late. We need old growth forests to remain intact.

The Government must work towards 100% plantation timber, and transition workers into different jobs – eg in the renewable energy sector.

After the massive fires of 2019/2020, so many of our native species have been pushed to the brink of survival. We lost a large percentage of our animals and many are still struggling to survive in the aftermath. All habitat must be protected so that the remaining animals that did survive can continue to breed and repopulate the forests.

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."

1.8 million hectares of habitat and feed trees were destroyed during the fires. The forest which remains must be protected.

Native forest logging makes no economic sense. The native forestry (hardwood) division of FCNSW is loss-making. 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.

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. 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.

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.