

**Submission
No 106**

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

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Thank you for allowing the opportunity to comment on the Legislative Council Inquiry into the long-term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry.

As a bushwalk leader and keen explorer of the bush I use forest areas for recreation and to introduce others to the pleasures inherent in such areas. Local forests I walk in west of Port Macquarie, have been subjected to logging and now lack diversity in species and tend to be blackbutt trees with an understorey of weed, mainly lantana. Further north in the Ballengarra State Forest there have been breaches of harvesting rules with subsequent fines. This happened after the logging rules were changed within the framework of the CIFOAs to allow, for example, incursion closer to streams or stream beds. One of the breaches in Ballengarra SF was for incursion into a stream. The recklessness displayed suggests to me a disregard for what is a public resource and one that deserves far more respect.

The native forestry (hardwood) division of Forestry Corp was loss-making for FY09 through FY 14 to the tune of an average of \$11 million per year. This is when it was easy to discern the figures in their annual report. Since 2014 the reporting has clouded my ability to judge the fortunes of the hardwood division but regardless I would assume that the following situation persists. The high cost, low return of hardwood harvesting is offset by softwood plantations, which generate most of the Forestry's annual earnings. This means the State Government is keeping it viable but only by taxpayers subsidising the destruction of native forests leading to habitat loss and it is a mind numbingly stupid situation. By default I am contributing to a poorer future for all and I have no say in it.

Forestry is doing a trial to ascertain the viability of forest 'residues' to supply biomass to burn to create energy at a time when Europe is revisiting the inanity of this practice. In a time when we need activities to reduce emissions within a decade there is consideration of a more polluting way of generating energy that will only accelerate the climate crisis. A recent discussion with a Forestry ecologist revealed he had no idea of what was going on so I have no faith the organisation is being informative within its own structure let alone in a public sense.

With the poor financial performance a focus for me I would contend that rather than subsidising the destruction of native forest for hardwood harvesting that we be subsidising the restoration of forest to be diverse in species and weed free. The money is there as it now supports logging. I would prefer the money used to increase biodiversity for the good of people.