

Submission
No 99

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Forestry NSW

Personal tree change experience

Moving from Sydney to Mid North Coast NSW 4 years ago I was expecting to experience natural wonders. Although the sea was a welcome additive to my life the biodiversity was not. Sydney has more diversity in flora and fauna than my local surrounds. I am currently trying my hand at farming native plants for Sydney flower market. The flowers are nectar rich attracting birds, mammals and insects, or so I thought.

I am in a walking group of local residents who are trying to stay fit and healthy and at times we walk in the State Forests. The forests we visit have a long history of logging and are very altered in diversity of species from the original bushland it once was. The demise of species (both flora and fauna) is evident, this I fear, impacts on the diversity of species visiting my flowers. This is troubling.

I reviewed the current forestry plan and have since assisted in visiting proposed logging sites and writing to Forestry Corporation and EPA to voice my concern that the current plan to log larger areas is not sustainable. An example is evident in Newry State Forest which have new areas added to the Forestry Corporation land these are rich in diversity of species. I, together with newly formed Forest Ecology Alliance (FEA) group of concerned residents undertook soil samples and other citizen science surveys which determined there to be fragile unstable soils currently supporting biodiversity and quality bushland full of life including Koalas. These forests with its steep slopes should not be logged. A report was presented to be EPA and Forestry Corporation explaining our findings.

A job I undertook in Sydney for more than ten years was working with NSW Government in the Environmental Trust program. I together with a panel of experts reviewed yearly grant applications. We (on behalf of the NSW Government) were always in favour of supporting groups who wished to plant trees shrubs and forbes for habitat. How can the same government accept bushland diversity in one hand and destroy it so significantly in the other?

Fire Risk

Bushland without structure is like a house without furnishings. Vegetation structure is part of the make up creating micro climates and complexities to host both diversity of flora and fauna. The current logging practice creates no vegetation structure by selective removal and retaining of specific trees. In a logged forest there is grass/herbs/forbes and canopy trees, many many canopy trees. The canopy trees are small and crowded, vegetation touching each other as they strive to compete for sunlight. This structure is rife for spreading fire, once in the canopy the fire spreads by strong winds. After 2019/20 wild fires research has been conducted to review the vegetation and risk of fire. Dailan Pugh and others suggests that structure plays an important role in ferocity and spread of fire.

Different plant species host different fauna species both above and below the ground. They have evolved to coexist in harmony and recent studies describe the micro flora in the soil assists and supports vegetation with complexities unimaginable. Did you know a mother tree can detect and transport nutrients via the soil communication network (her roots and mycorrhizal fungi) to her saplings who may be struggling on the forest floor? Amazing! we know so little of the complexities.

Water quality

The process of logging disturbs the soil causing a number of detrimental impacts including water quality, sediment movement and destruction of soil biota which binds the soil. There appears to be

three steps in logging native forests which impact water quality 1. Roads and Access 2. Tree Removal and Disturbance 3. Maintenance and Spraying of Weeds. Each one of these practices adversely impact on the quality of water through disturbance within the catchment. After logging residents downstream should be financially recompensed for a tainted water supply and clogging irrigation systems. The natural riparian systems would be damaged through sedimentation movement creating changes to flow and water depths, depleting oxygen and creating an environment conducive to algal bloom. The fauna would likewise be impacted by this change decreasing diversity of species which rely on a clean riparian system.

The soil in a natural environment is stable with the humic matter, roots and complex soil microbial systems holding things together. The logging practice releases all these stable qualities. Additionally, if the soil is made up of material which dissolves in water (dispersive), the small clay particles are carried with the water resulting in a milky turgid water and leaving an eroded gully. If herbicide is sprayed research shows the herbicide clings to clay particles adding to the detrimental impacts of water quality.