

Submission  
No 124

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

**Organisation:** Byrrill Creek Landcare

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## **NSW Parliamentary Inquiry: Long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry**

Byrill Creek Landcare is a group that voluntarily works on riparian sites in the Byrill Creek Catchment area in the southern area of Tweed Shire. This area is the highest value riparian conservation in the shire and we have planted over 2,500 plants & trees since 2012.

Much of the land surrounding the valley floor is koala habitat, and also good quality regenerative rainforest, which adjoins Wollumbin & Mebbin National Park, and most of the land is privately owned. Our Landcare members all have resident koalas on the ridge top areas of their properties, and we believe conservation of forests & particularly Koala habitat is extremely important, be it in State forests or private land.

In our valley 2 instances have occurred of logging in core Koala habitat on private land in the last 6 years, One case went through EPA and took many years to get an outcome in the court. The value of mature major koala food trees (Grey gums & Tallow woods) can never be replaced.

During the horrific bush fires of 2019/20 1.8 million hectares of habitat and feed trees were destroyed. Nearly three billion animals were killed or displaced during the **bushfires** scientists say. The findings meant it was one of "worst wildlife disasters in modern history", said the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

The forest which remains must be protected. 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 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 small ,refuges for wildlife

In October 2019, during the drought, 3 nearby local properties burnt. Just last Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May, Landcare members & Tweed Valley Wild life carers planted 300 Trees (mainly koala food species) to help regenerate the damage caused by the bush fires. Local people care & act whilst FCNSW continues logging unabated.

There needs to be an end to public native forest logging. Instead an immediate expansion of the plantation estate, with a goal of a 100% plantation-based timber industry and move towards a more sustainable future.

In the early 2000s many local residents raised awareness & protested the planned logging on the western slopes of Wollumbin/Mt Warning National Park & after 4 years it was dedicated as National Park & Conservation area, along with Mebbin National Park.

We believe all of the most ecologically significant and biodiverse state forests that FCNSW plans to harvest in should be transferred into the national parks estate as soon as possible.

The economic returns & losses of the native forestry (hardwood) division FCNSW is ridiculous. Taxpayers are subsidising the destruction of our native forests and paying to drive species to extinction!

FCNSW's revenue is set to decline \$100 million, (25 per cent) from next financial year, with predicted losses of about \$15 million a year from 2022 to 2024. NSW Government is ultimately liable for keeping it afloat!

There needs to be Government funded transition plan for communities impacted by transition out of native forest logging & into plantation planting. The plantation industry in NSW employs 11,600 people. Only 800 people are currently employed in native forestry.

Forestry industry job losses are avoidable. Australia need to value add our beautiful hardwoods, as for years we export our timber as low value products like wood chips.

We spent a night camping near Eden, on the southern edge of Twofold Bay at the only place we could find a space, next to the loading facility for wood chips onto large ships. The loading never stopped all night, and I wondered how many large trees/ hectares were cut down to feed this non stop industry for 1 night?

Australia, instead of using our own timber, processed in this country, imports high value products like engineered timber from overseas. A plantation-based industry with more processing in Australia could greatly increase regional forestry jobs.

Lastly, but most important of all, our planet is facing a climate emergency & we are heading towards a future of 2 degrees global warming. We need to act NOW and reduce deforestation. Our forests are a crucial carbon sink. 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.

As a landcare group, our members will continue planting trees, linking fragmented corridors and providing a refuge for our wildlife.

We ask the FCNSW also to act responsibly and end logging in Native forests, so crucial habitats remain.

Yours Sincerely,

Joanna Gardner Co ordinator: Byrrill Creek Landcare