

Submission  
No 142

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

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Submission re the future of the native forest logging industry in NSW.

The 2019/20 bushfires in NSW had a devastating impact on the native forests and the communities surrounding them. Vast areas of forest were severely burnt resulting in a huge loss of fauna and flora. In many cases the fires were so extensive that it makes recovery difficult. For this reason any areas of unburnt forest play a vital role as wildlife refuges from which plant and animal populations can expand. Preserving unburnt forest is essential for ecosystems to heal and for biodiversity to be increased. Communities in fire impacted areas are still hurting. Preserving areas of unburnt forest is important for the healing process.

An EPA review 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.” Logging in remaining native forests should not be allowed to proceed.

#### EMPLOYMENT:

Employment in native forests is not sustainable. Greater, more secure and long term employment can be found in areas such as forest management, tourism and recreation. Increasing forest tourism eg walking tracks, camping areas, visitor centers not only ensures forest protection but also strengthens communities through business opportunities. It is estimated that there are only 800 people currently employed in native forestry as opposed to 11600 people in plantations. Preserving our native forests has greater employment value especially in the long term.

#### ECONOMIC:

The native forest (hardwood) division of FCNSW operates at a loss and has to be offset by softwood plantations. It makes no sense for taxpayers to subsidize this industry. Predicted losses of around \$15m a year is not acceptable, Our native forests are valuable as biodiverse ecosystems acting as long term carbon sinks. If we log the forests we lose vital habitat for no economic gain. We can meet our timber needs through existing plantations and reforestation already cleared land.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE:

Climate Change is happening and unless action is taken now the impacts will be catastrophic in the not too distant future. For this reason we have to act on climate change now. Preserving our native forests has an important role in combatting climate change.

Research has shown the value of old growth forests as huge carbon sinks. An old, undisturbed forest has the greatest potential for carbon storage. When a forest is logged carbon is released. A regenerating forest is not as efficient in storing carbon.

We have to value these forests for the role they play in ensuring our future.

Native forest logging must not be permitted. The value of our forests is in preserving them. Their value is as a carbon sink, as a biodiverse ecosystem, as a connection with nature, as a source of sustainable employment where nature is valued.

We must allow our forests to heal, we must allow our forest communities to heal and we must preserve our forests for future generations.

We cannot afford to lose our forests. Logging them doesn't make sense.