

**Submission  
No 156**

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

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# Submission to the NSW Legislative Assembly Inquiry into the Long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry

*My place is in Congo (near Moruya) and I would greatly appreciate the members of this Inquiry can appreciate how our businesses and community will benefit from a sustainable forestry industry, with no native forest logging.*

State forests near me (Mogo, Boorman, Bodalla, etc.) and others in the south coast I am aware of would better service the community as protected reserves.

Ending native forest logging, and expanding the conservation estate, will benefit my local environment, community and economy. For example there are so many other forest based industries, recreational shooting and archery in designated areas, mountain bike cycle tracks, walking tracks, increase access to horses and 4WD users, bee keeping, seed collection, recreational green spaces, all of which create more jobs and more tourism dollars.

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.

Ending native forest logging would also mean less danger to the local community through reduced fire risk, and less logging trucks on the roads. A recent survey by the forest products industry demonstrated clearly that current logging practices in native forests do not have community acceptance, that is, no social licence.

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

Addressing the inquiry's Terms of reference

- a) the nature of, and relationship within, the value chain between the timber and forest products industry, logistics companies, manufacturers, retailers, exporters and their relationship with timber supply and environmental management, and opportunities to enhance supply chains.*

Logging in native forest in State Forests is uneconomic and unsustainable. Currently the losses incurred by the native hard wood non plantation sector are borne by the profitable plantation sector. That is, currently logging in native forests in State forests is uneconomic and heavily subsidised by taxpayers.

Current logging practice in NSW forests is driven by wood chip and firewood supply which is compromising the ongoing supply of useful construction timber from these forests. Softwood and hardwood plantations are better suited to supplying these important materials.

For many years the woodchip industry has perpetuated the lie that wood chips are produced from waste post logging. It is well known and documented that machines used for whole of chain of woodchip production from haulage to chipping can only accommodate logs. The so-called waste is left on the forest floor and either burnt or left.

*b) the impact of external influences on the timber and forest products industry, including but not limited to drought, water, fire, regulatory structures, habitat protection and local, state and federal policies regarding climate change and plantation establishment,*

Climate change is causing droughts of greater intensity and duration which must lead to the drying out forests and hence flammability.

Climate change increases the risk of fires and recent research showed logging increases risk of fires – this has significant implications for logging carried out near homes sites and other assets.

Regulatory structures are inadequate to prevent illegal logging in State Forests. Current regulations are inadequate to protect many species on the verge of extinction, for example the amazing greater glider totally dependent on mature trees with hollows, and the swift parrot, almost extinct and reliant on eucalypt blossom to recover following their heroic flight from Tasmania.

NSW Forests do not train or supervise contractors adequately so that non-compliances and fines have become frequent.

*c) projections for softwood and hardwood supply and demand over the next 30 years*

Plantation establishment on marginal farmland is the best way to ensure adequate sustainable timber supplies in the future, provide jobs and avoid massive State economic losses. There needs to be immediate expansion of the plantation estate, with a goal of a 100% plantation-based timber industry.

*d) transparency and data reporting of timber supply,*

Information about recent non-compliance, fines and stop work orders are difficult to find on the EPA and NSW Forestry web sites.

*(e) opportunities for the timber and forest products industry and timber dependent communities and whether additional protections, legislation or regulation are required in New South Wales to better support the forestry products industry and timber-dependent communities, including opportunities for value adding*

There are few jobs associated with forestry as its very mechanised. The few jobs are already heavily subsidised (approximately \$5 million per job). The 800 forestry jobs could in main be replaced by reinstating the 500 or so job losses from the National Parks service.

*(f) the role of the government in addressing key economic, environmental and social challenges to the industry, including funding and support to encourage improvements in forestry practices, training, innovation and automation, workplace health and safety, industry and employee support, land use management and forestry projects,*

Forestry industry job losses are avoidable. Right now we export low value products like wood chips, and import high value products like engineered timber. A plantationbased 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. The timber industry can modernise and move to a sustainable future while meeting the needs of communities and industry by;
  - Immediate expansion of the plantation estate, with a goal of a 100% plantation-based timber industry as soon as possible.
  - Government transition plans for communities impacted by transition out of native forest logging.
  - Transfer of the most ecologically significant state forests into the national parks estate.

*(g) the environmental impact and sustainability of native forest logging, including following the 2019/20 bushfire season,*

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 should be protected.

*(h) the operation, effectiveness and outcomes of the implementation of the NSW Forestry Industry Roadmap and Bushfire Industry Recovery Package,*

The native forestry (hardwood) division of FCNSW is already and heavily subsidized and loss-making. The high cost, low return of hardwood harvesting is only offset by FCNSW's softwood plantations, which generate most of the corporation's annual earnings.

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.

*(i) best practices in other Australian and international jurisdictions in relation to the sustainability of the timber and forest products industry, including social sustainability, community and Indigenous engagement and multiple uses of the forest estate*

Current forestry practices are not only unsustainable but illegal as judged by the NSW state regulator (EPA). Australia native forest logging cannot achieve the higher levels of best practice accreditation which are internationally accepted as best practice. Many years of mismanagement of the south coast forests have failed to regenerate so that the forests are no longer capable of supplying the timber required for building.

*(j) Other related matters - How you think your organisation, business or community will benefit from a sustainable forestry industry, with no native forest logging.*

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Ending native forest logging, and expanding the conservation estate, will benefit my local environment, community and economy. For example there are so many other forest based industries, recreational shooting and archery in designated areas, mountain bike cycle tracks, walking tracks, increase access to horses and 4WD users, bee keeping, seed collection, recreational green spaces, all of which create more jobs and more tourism dollars

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