

**Submission
No 203**

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

Name: Ms Marie Healy

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Dear Committee,

Please see below my submission into the Inquiry into Long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry.

I am writing as a GP, the daughter of a late vet and fellow bird-lover, NSW resident and a voter. I am deeply disturbed that our governments, elected to represent the people and this great country with its unique fauna and flora, are continuing to allow lobbyists and vested interests shape policy, rather than the public good.

One sentinel fowl of this terrible situation is the Swift Parrot, with a precarious prognosis; its numbers are in serious decline and extinction a real probability. Hand-in-hand with this threat is the danger that ongoing logging, and fires, have for its habitat, the Spotted Gum forests of the New South Wales south coast.

How can our elected representatives allow the habitat destruction of one of Australia's most endangered birds? This is sheer recklessness. They breed only in the forests of Tasmania in summer before migrating to the Australian mainland in autumn where they seek out mature forests to spend the winter, feeding on abundant blossom and lerp.

The forests of New South Wales are critical feeding habitat for these birds. In particular, the Spotted Gum forests of the New South Wales south coast are well-documented as one of the most important mainland foraging areas for Swift Parrots.

Many of the Swift Parrot foraging sites in NSW occur outside of conservation reserves, including within state forests managed by the Forestry Corporation of NSW and open for logging under the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Agreement (CIFOA).

Unless decisive action is taken to protect the remaining forest habitat across their range and improve and fund management actions, Swift Parrots could be extinct within the next two decades.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are the most important – and interdependent – human induced environmental challenges that society faces today, threatening people's lives and well-being. Nature-based solutions are key to tackling both these challenges. Nature-based solutions such as protecting native forests are key to meeting the UNFCCC's Paris Agreement goals of mitigating and adapting to climate change; Globally, they can provide over 30% of the climate mitigation action needed by 2030 to prevent global temperature rise above 1.5°C, above which the IPCC warns we would see damaging and irreversible impacts to all life on earth.

In the words of the great David Attenborough:

"This habitat destruction has not only been the lead cause of biodiversity loss, it has been, and continues to be, one of the lead causes of greenhouse gas emissions."

(from A Life on Our Planet)

Intact, biodiverse ecosystems, such as forests, are particularly efficient and cost-effective nature-based solutions, as they sequester and store significantly more carbon when compared to monoculture tree plantations, agriculture and grazed lands, in addition to conserving biodiversity and providing a range of other ecosystem services. They are also more resilient, functional and able to adapt to a warming climate.

This inquiry has the opportunity to recommend critical actions that can save this species and secure a more environmentally sustainable future for the timber industry. In considering the future of the timber industry in NSW, I urge you to consider the following recommendations.

Recommendation(s):

- Immediately and permanently suspend all current and planned forestry operations within fire impacted Swift Parrot foraging habitat.
- Amend the CIOFA to exclude all known and potential Swift Parrot foraging habitat.
- Amend the CIOFA to address the effects of climate change, including increased bush fires and droughts.
- Conserve remaining intact native forests and facilitate the expansion and connectivity of old growth native forests.
- Develop a forest industry transition plan with a focus on wood production from sustainable and appropriately placed plantations.
- Invest in sustainable tourism infrastructure and opportunities for local communities, tapping into the economic value and services of natural areas in NSW.
- Explore nature-based solution incentives, such as carbon markets, to finance forest conservation.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Marie Healy