

EDWARD HILLS

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**Topic 1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW**

My name is Dr Edward Hills and I have lived [REDACTED] for the past 25 years. I would like to offer my views regarding the viability and sustainability of current forestry operations and practices to emphasise the need to desist from 'harvesting' what is left of our native forests

I speak from personal experience when in 2011 I witnessed first hand the destruction of the native forests just north of Bermagui. There are a number reasons why the RFAs have been a disaster and why the NSW government should cease logging in our native forests.

The taxpayer subsidisation of the loss making wood chip industry must come to an end. High value native timber is being trashed to support a failing industry instead of being preserved to ensure the integrity of eco-systems that support native species as well as providing viable ways of dealing with the immanent existential effects of climate change.

The wholesale destruction of native forests increase the likelihood of bush fires that have already threatened this community. In 2019-2020 beginning in Cobargo this area was almost annihilated by out of control bush fires exacerbated by 'industrial' back burning approaches to fuel reduction. The supervision of native forests should be placed in the hands of indigenous people who for centuries have secured the viability, integrity and sustainability of our forests. Under their supervision cool burning and culturally appropriate practices would replace mass burning and habitat destruction.

Even if we look at the purely economic benefits of preserving our native forests we can see that eco-tourism especially here on the far south coast is eminently more sustainable and productive than the highly subsidised wood chip industry. The future economic viability of communities like ours are fundamentally dependent on tourists escaping (temporarily) the urban blight of our large treeless conurbs. Bermagui could be seen as the gateway to the wilderness coast in which the community in all its rich variety can benefit from the custodianship of the traditional owners of this country.

Logging of native of native forests contributes nothing to the local economy except destruction of the natural beauty of this place.

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**Topic 2. Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values**

It is clear from I have argued that the cessation of logging native forests would preserve ecological values by securing the habitat of threatened species such as the koala. My understanding is that there are already some significant initiatives relating to Aboriginal custodianship especially when it comes to culturally appropriate burning practices. Clearly the health of the country is synonymous with the health of indigenous communities who depend on country to define their very being.

**Topic 3. Demand for timber products, particularly as relates to NSW housing, construction, mining, transport and retail**

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Once again, logging native forests will not solve the problem of supply. Plantations should be meeting the demand for the legitimate supply of timber for construction etc. Unfortunately Forestry NSW/Forestry Corporation have not been telling the truth about trashing forests to feed the failing wood chip industry.

**Topic 4. The future of softwood and hardwood plantations and the continuation of Private Native Forestry in helping meet timber supply needs**

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I believe that plantations should have been central to long term planning and our future needs should met by reverting entirely to plantation production.

**Topic 5. The role of State Forests in maximising the delivery of a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes and options for diverse management, including Aboriginal forest management models**

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There has been absolutely no value in allowing State forests to control production. There's very little local employment. The uglification of the environment caused by increasingly short term harvests has undermined local economies and endangered our lives by increasing the likelihood of bush fires. As I have already mentioned Aboriginal custodianship would not only strengthen indigenous communities but also guarantee viability and sustainability.

**Topic 6. Opportunities to realise carbon and biodiversity benefits and support carbon and biodiversity markets, and mitigate and adapt to climate change risks, including the greenhouse gas emission impacts of different uses of forests and assessment of climate change risks to forests**

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This is not a new idea. Simply keeping native trees in the ground if properly managed to avoid carbon credit fraud significantly improves our ability to mitigate climate change and thus secure the future for our children.