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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

I welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the Forestry Panel regarding forestry operations in NSW. I write as a resident of NSW and as an engaged observer of nature with concern for a sustainable future, to state emphatically that I believe it is essential now for NSW to bring an end to native forest logging.

There is probably nothing more synonymous with the Australia of the past than chopping down trees. I grew up in a NSW town with a small state forest nearby and our neighbours owned a sawmill. When my family bought a farm in the 1970s because it was leasehold, forestry came and cut down and took most of the large Cypress trees near the homestead. My first exposure to tree loss. Today there are no sawmills in town and there is not much left of that forest.

Influenced by a love of the natural environment, I started birdwatching as a hobby 35 years ago. I moved to the coast and discovered the wonderful coastal forests of NSW. In the 1980s, on slow drives up the Pacific Highway, I'd look for forest tracks to search for rare birds; visit friends in the Bellingen valley to maybe find a Koala and going south would marvel at the sounds in the fabulous forests, even though I might struggle to identify what made the noises. According to articles I have read, many of those native forests are now deforested, depauperate forest habitats and often quite silent. (For example, the recent publication Ward, M., Ashman, K., Lindenmayer, D. B., Legge, S., Kindler G., Cadman, T Fletcher, R., Whiterod, N., Lintermans, M., Zylstra, P., Stewart, R., Thomas, H., Blanch, S., & Watson, J. E. M. (2024). Shifting baselines clarify the impact of contemporary logging on forest-dependent threatened species. *Conservation Science and Practice*, 6(9), e13185. <https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.13185>)

Apart from the scientific evidence in the above research report that shows cutting down native vegetation for timber destroys habitat for forest-dependent species, I strongly believe based on my own years of noting forest birdlife disappearing from the view of the casual observer, that deforestation in NSW has reached a critical juncture. Converting degraded state forests into national parks or similar is not enough to resurrect habitats. It's shocking that eastern Australia was identified in a WWF report as the only country in the developed world in a list of 'deforestation hotspots' alongside Colombia, Peru, Laos and Mozambique. If native forest logging was to cease in NSW perhaps we would not appear further up this list next time along with Borneo or Brazil. (The Guardian 13/01/2021). Nor would 'shifting baselines' allow the next generation to be ignorant of what natural heritage was being lost while native forests continued to be logged.

To knowing continue a practice that is leading to the possibility of extinction of species is more than irresponsible. The greater glider in particular is highly at risk within forests such as Tallaganda, Badja Styx River and Tuggolo State Forests. Within the boundaries of the proposed Great Koala National Park in Northern NSW logging even small tranches of forest has been shown to be highly destructive for koala habitat. However currently it is not small areas but in fact 18,800 hectares of core koala habitat being logged or scheduled for logging within the assessed Great

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Koala National Park area. I urge that an immediate logging moratorium be placed on greater glider and kola habitat while the FIAP process is underway.