

DEBRA LITTLE

Submission ID: 205007

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**Organisation:** N/A

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**Location:** New South Wales

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**Supporting materials uploaded:** N/A

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Submission date: 10/13/2024 4:51:55 PM

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

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The logging of public native forests is not a sustainable activity. The Forestry Corporation of NSW suffers regularly, significant financial losses as part of its 'business'. Yields are also declining. Even removing protections (in 2018) for mature trees is insufficient to make this a viable industry. And removing such mature trees has a significant downside to say the least for wildlife that rely on such trees for hollows and for food - at least 174 species.

Native forest logging affects waterways and soils negatively, reducing ecosystem functions.

Very basic things which are particularly necessary in a world affected by climate change, such as carbon storage and biomass stability, are undermined and reduced.

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

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I can't stress too much how healthy, biodiverse, weed-free forests are important to me as a living, breathing human being, and in a physical and mental sense. I can imagine that for First Nations people this physical, emotional and cultural and spiritual connection to forests is paramount.

Forests generate rainfall, clean the air we breathe and cool our landscapes. It's not hard to imagine the contrast with a desert environment, where life is so more precarious.

There are numerous - too many - threatened species that are directly impacted by logging native forests. And this number is increasing. They cannot move as we can. So many are directly killed as a result of the logging process. Others face a lingering cruel death.

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

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It is a myth that saw or veneer logs are the main 'product' of our public forests. Half of the logs taken from our native forests in 2023 were turned into woodchip and exported. This is a very bad use of a precious natural resource. The native forest logging industry is clearly a woodchip and pulpwood driven industry.

In 2023 87% of hardwood plantation logs were exported as woodchips

Sawn and treated softwoods can substitute for all current uses for native forest and plantation hardwoods.

Demand is falling for native forest products as alternative timber products are available - cheaper and easier to work with.

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**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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Priority should not be given to woodchips for export from plantations. Rather a higher priority should be given to a higher proportion of harvested logs from plantations ss saw and veneer logs. Plantations already provide 91% of our country's log production.

Due to the significant loss-making of the business of the Forestry Corporation, (tens of millions of dollars) it is a heavily subsidised industry by Government - and the public. So it cannot be seen as

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competitive. It effectively distorts the market away from the more profitable softwood plantation industry.

High-end and luxury native hardwood products should only be selectively - truly selectively - harvested on private land and under strict, audited conditions.

**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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Unlogged forests have so many benefits to entire ecosystems and ultimately as humans and to the society and economy we live in.

They have value as natural assets for many country towns. They assist with water quality in local reservoirs and they attract tourists such as myself. Seeing logged degraded forests is a turn off. I was appalled to see a steeply - actually clear felled - logged slope in Chichester State Forest when I visited in June 2023 in order to take a walk on a newly reopened walking trail down to a spectacular waterfall.

Carbon storage and abatement provided by native forests is crucial to our future on a warming, climate change affected planet. Logging undermines this role.

I am fairly outraged that as a citizen of NSW we are actually paying (via subsidies and other mechanisms) millions of dollars to destroy the unique biodiversity of our state. Destroying the habitat for so many species including critically endangered species. This is like shooting ourselves in the foot.

I believe the economic value of an unlogged forest that is functioning naturally without the disturbance and destruction associated with logging is significantly higher than logged areas.

There are great opportunities for First Nations Ranger Programs to be expanded if we are to cease logging our forests and devote and promote more widely caring for country actions - and so manage as well as restore the health and natural functions of our forested landscapes.

**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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It is estimated that 3.6 million tonnes of Carbon are released each year via native forest logging. The amount of stored carbon is reduced by logging.

We are trying to deliver more electric cars to the road network yet here is an action - ending native forest logging - that would remove the equivalent of around 840,000 cars from our roads each year. This is so much more within the reach of a Government.

Logging of native forests makes them more vulnerable to fire. If we ended logging they would be more resilient to the catastrophic fires that we are forecast to see with climate change.