

Public submission

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Fran Fagan SUBMISSION TO NATIVE FORESTRY INQUIRY

My name is Fran Fagan. I am 71 years old and a retired Clinical Psychologist living in [REDACTED] in rural NSW.

I am part of a local community that is devastated by the current native forest logging and our state government's failure to show care for the environment, despite their pre-election promises.

Chris Minns promised to set up a Great Koala National Park in Northern NSW. Instead, it seems our local state forests are destined to be industrially clear-felled. The animals living in them are extremely vulnerable, especially the greater gliders. They are nocturnal, and cannot be seen by forestry staff during the day, as they live in tree hollows.

It is particularly distressing to see and hear the destruction in the forests and to hear of what more is planned, when we know that extreme weather events are happening worldwide right now.

The Australian government spends just 0.1% on protecting our incredible wildlife and landscapes. Australia leads the world in mammal extinctions, and we are the only developed country on the global list of deforestation hotspots. There are 17 Australian ecosystems currently showing signs of collapse. We are also living on the driest inhabited continent on Earth.

I know [REDACTED] has opened the Nature Positive event recently. To me it sounds like pure greenwashing, as both the State and Federal Labor governments are letting Australia down badly where nature is concerned. We deserve better. Much better.

I believe that native forest logging is unsustainable for the following reasons

- Logging can only operate with major taxpayer subsidies. The Nature Conservation Council says that Forestry Commission NSW received \$246.9 million in grants for the 2019-2020 financial year, while the hardwood division (responsible for native forest logging) made a loss of \$28.2 million over the same period.
- When loggers make mistakes and incur fines, the taxpayers pay the fines.

- There are numerous examples of Forestry making mistakes and not searching for endangered animals.
- Even when greater glider den locations are discovered, there is often a long delay before they are marked on maps. Hence the animals may be killed anyway.
- There are inadequate protections generally for endangered animals. This is likely to worsen, as Climate Change worsens, forests get further degraded, and vulnerable animals become more so.
- I object to forestry logging being funded by taxpayers, especially when the forests are worth more standing, and intact.
- Regional Forest Agreements do not consider climate change.
- Forests perform a number of services. They help produce rain, slow wind and water, slow erosion, help prevent drought, feed animals and insects, store carbon and breathe out oxygen.
- They also house animals in tree hollows. But tree hollows are getting scarcer.
- The yield from public forests has declined by 40% since 2010.
- Native forest logging increases fire threat and intensity, and allows weeds to enter the forest.
- The demand for timber got from forests is declining quickly.
- The proportion of timber used for furniture or floors is not high. Generally, 70% is woodchipped, for cardboard or toilet paper. Some is made into tomato stakes. About 60% stays on the forest floor, and gets burned. The burning leaves the forest more prone to fires.
- It is a grave concern that some of our beautiful trees are woodchipped, and then sent to power plants in Australia or overseas, to be burned to produce so-called “green electricity”. This is preposterous! Timber cannot be burned without creating greenhouse gases. This notion of “biofuels ”is a lie that has been perpetuated worldwide, for the convenience of those who value profit over truth and integrity.
- Another issue to consider is the desperation of activists who want to stop the logging and save the animals. Non-violent activists are putting their own bodies on the line for this reason.
- We are in an escalating Climate Emergency, and forests sequester large amounts of greenhouse gases. Intact forests support a mix of plants and animals. These living things, together, function as ecosystems. All life on Earth depends on ecosystems.

- Forests also have great value for recreation, and for attracting tourists. But logging native forests is not compatible with these uses. As an example, Kiwarrak Forest in Tinonee is currently being logged. It is regularly used for cycling events. Currently it is being tidied up by cyclists who need to remove debris from logging.
- A similar situation exists for First Nations peoples, for whom forests have particular long-term cultural significance.
- Professor David Lindenmeyer is a world -renowned leader in forest ecology. He says our state native forests are worsening our climate with their emissions. But he also says that stopping native forest logging in Australia could enable us to quickly meet our greenhouse gas emissions target. (Lindenmeyer, D. *The Forest Wars*, 2024. Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest)
- Professor Lindenmeyer explains in detail his views on fixing the problems in our forests, and I am aware he has put a detailed submission into this inquiry.

In summing up, I believe an urgent moratorium should be imposed on native forest logging. And importantly, urgent retraining should be provided for forestry workers. It is clear that the old “business as usual” model is not working well in our new climate-changing world.

As David Lindenmeyer says: *Forests can persist without us – but we cannot persist without them.*