

NSW Parliamentary Inquiry: Long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry Submission Due 28th May, 2021

To Whom It May Concern

Native forest logging has been a contentious issue for decades on the Mid-North Coast of NSW and it continues to this [day](#).

As a political group, the Coffs Harbour Greens advocate for the protection and preservation of our rich biodiversity including both fauna and flora while supporting sustainable forms of employment.

- We see the threats to our regions forests, as predominately determined by the influence of poorly designed development and economic forces. Science confirms these influences are having unsustainable impacts on [High-Value Arboreal Habitats in Coffs Harbour's LGA](#) as "Forestry operations are a contemporary contributing factor in the decline of old-growth and other HV Arboreal Habitats" (pg. 30).
- As convener for the Coffs Harbour Greens, my experience has been one of neglect by the forestry industry and their contractors. During a logging operation in the Lower Bucca State Forest north of Coffs Harbour in 2020, Bellingen Environment Centre spokesperson Ashley Love and I visited the logging coup and recorded the failure of Forestry to properly identify the critically endangered Scrub Turpentine that would have been destroyed had BEC not surveyed the area. See our video [here](#)!
- We are concerned climate change will also further threaten our unique and valued biodiversity with many species in decline as their environments are undermined by the forestry activities. This was particularly highlighted by the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Koala Habitats and Populations that found wild populations of koala are expected to be extinct by [2050](#).
- The State Governments Koala SEPP 2021 is a significant concern since it provides private native forestry with new rules in order to source timber. We recognise the challenges for the timber industry as a result of the 2020 black summer fires but is the right approach to open up 80% of NSW to timber getting without planning [regulation?](#).
- We believe innovative technologies that have been in discussion for over a decade, offer a way forward as replacement for timber sourced from our native forests for the [construction industry](#). We reject the idea that timber can be sourced from our native forests, be that from our state forest estate or forests on private lands, and exported as wood chip or pulped into pellets to burn [biomass](#) for energy.
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- We are concerned that our native forests will not survive another major bushfire as was witnessed by the black summer fires of 2020 if logging in our state forests and on private lands continue. We need to better manage our forests according to systems of management such as fire-stick farming methods to reduce the impact and severity of bushfires, which is the opposite case when our forests are logged using industrial methods.
- Scientific analysis has determined significant risks to forest ecosystems by logging. David Lyndenmayer and others have found, “The recent fires in southern Australia were unprecedented in scale and severity. Much commentary has rightly focused on the role of climate change in exacerbating the risk of fire. Here, we contend that policy makers must recognize that historical and contemporary logging of forests has had profound effects on these fires’ severity and frequency.” [In their 2020 [paper](#) abstract, *Recent Australian wildfires made worse by logging and associated forest management*].
- It is concerning that industrial logging of the hinterland of Coffs Harbour will lead to hotter and more frequent fire events placing lives and property at risk. This is a significant liability for governments of all levels, to act in the best interests of the community. With alternative technologies available for timber replacement and energy, the logging of our native forests must be phased out immediately.
- The Great Koala National Park is a proposal for our forests that we believe makes economic sense. The University of Newcastle were recently consulted to prepared an [economic study](#) of the proposal and found that it would create close to 10, 000 jobs over the next 15 years generating \$1.2B in revenue. This is direction that is a win win for our community and forests.

Conclusion

Our forests are critical habitat for Australia’s iconic fauna and flora.

The industrialisation of forest ecosystems is having detrimental effects on vegetation types such as turning rainforest ecosystems in to dry sclerophyll and threatening vulnerable and endangered species.

The risks associated with extreme bush fire events need to managed to reduce fuel load and increase carbon and moisture levels. Climate change is already having an impact and future droughts will lead to conditions that logging helps make worse.

We believe an economically sensible path forward is to support eco-tourism such as the Great Koala National Park and Indigenous land management systems that use fire to manage native and invasive plant species according to traditional ecological knowledge.

Kind regards,
Jonathan Cassell
Coffs Harbour Greens Convener