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Private Native Forestry Review
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Dear Private Native Forest Review Committee members

It is with feelings of despair and sorrow that I make this submission to you in relation to the **Private Native Forest Review**.

Given the so-called consultation process around **the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals**, which have now commenced, whereby the New South Wales Government chose to ignore most of the advice of the overwhelming majority of submissions including those made by reputable scientists and people with first-hand experience of forest ecology, I find myself wondering why I am bothering to engage in this process relating to the review of the logging of private native forests. It is clear that the intent behind the review is to pave the way for the erosion of what little environmental protections there are, to increase the capacity for exploitation of native forests located on private land, similar to the eventuality in the case of the CIFOA in relation to public native forests.

Nonetheless I reiterate my previously stated concerns around the logging of any native forest. There is very little native forest remaining and what does remain is under increasing threat from drought, fire, floods and climate change. We must urgently change our thinking around sustainable timber resources and make an urgent switch to plantation timbers only, and protect what remains of our native forests. This will be a difficult transition but the sooner it is made the better...prolonging the inevitable by taking whatever native forest remains is irresponsible and reckless and this generation has no right to take everything and leave nothing behind for future generations.

The NSW Government displays either astounding ignorance or an extraordinary level of wilful blindness when it comes to matters of the environment. The inability to comprehend the integral link between environmental health and human health is truly astounding. The alternative, that this link is disregarded, at the expense of human well-being, in the name of short term profits and electoral gains, is unthinkable. To hear Premier Berejiklian state, in relation to the recent/current fish kills in the Darling River: "Of course I care about the fish, but to be honest with you, I care about the people more" (ABC News, 29.1.19) fills me with frustration and despondency because, under her leadership at least, we seem destined to plough onwards towards a hideous dystopian future where water wars are a reality, diversity is all but gone and humans are starving and fighting over whatever resources may be left.

Our native forests play a significant role in buffering against drought and precipitating rainfall. They are also home to thousands of species of flora and fauna unique to Australia, and in our case, the Northern Rivers. Native forests do not only consist of the trees upon which the eyes of the logging industry fall, but of diverse vegetation which provides habitat and food for fauna species and which in many cases is specific to a local area and is rare and significant. All this vegetation is treated as waste product by the industry, as a sort of 'by-catch', yet it provides valuable biodiversity its own right. This tendency to discard whatever in the environment does meet our immediate needs for profit or gain is shockingly wasteful to me, and a disgrace.

Unlike the members of the NSW Government, apparently, I am well connected to the local environment as I live close to native forest (both private and National Park) and I have been a wildlife carer for over ten years.

I am frequently called upon to rescue wildlife when a member of public has removed a SINGLE tree, only to find it contained a nest of some kind. The species involved have included Feather tail Gliders, Squirrel Gliders (endangered), Black Mountain Possums, Barn Owls, various parrot species and Nightjar Owlets. I shudder to think how many creatures lose their homes and habitat as the loggers munch through our native forests.

I have seen the impact of floods on our local creek, Goolmangar Creek, which is a primary tributary to the Wilson's River and I reside near its source. Never have I seen it looking in such poor condition. Multiple floods causing massive erosion from compromised riparian zones have resulted in significant silting and rendered the creek much more prone to flow interruptions and fish deaths.

Indeed, the Wilson's River itself, once a mighty river on which large boats once could travel, carrying out the enormous cedar logs cut from the surrounding native forests, is barely capable of carrying a small boat, such a shallow version of its former self has it become, due to years of erosion and destruction of riparian zones along tributaries and the river itself.

Native forests do not 'grow back' as is often stated by the industry. Yes something eventually grows back, but what grows back is severely depleted of its former biodiversity which takes hundreds, indeed thousands of years to evolve, much of it so dependent on sensitively balanced micro-eco systems that it cannot survive at all once those systems are compromised. Thinning what canopy remains severely compromises biodiversity and leaves the forest open to invasion of weeds such as lantana and now Tropical Soda Apple (which is spreading quickly through the region) and prone to Bell Miner Associated Dieback (BMAD). I have seen the alarming spread of BMAD across compromised (i.e. logged or burned) forests in the region in the twenty years I have lived here.

Similarly, replacing native forests with monocultures of blackbutt does not a forest make and is irresponsible in the extreme.

The more pressure we place on our native forests, our rivers and creeks and our environment in general, the more the people will eventually suffer. We will continue to diminish the environment's (and therefore our own) resilience against bushfires, floods and droughts. As we do so these events will further erode human health and sustainability. Water will become increasingly scarce as will food supplies. The fish and the koalas will be long gone. Along with many other species they are the 'canaries in the mine'...water that is not fit for fish is not fit for humans either. Habitat that is not fit for any other living thing is also not fit for humans.

I could go on to address the Review topics, as I did in my submission relating to the draft Coastal IFOA. However, given that any submission I may make is likely to be ignored, (if indeed even read at all), as was the case with the so-called IFOA consultation process, and given that I currently have a lot of wildlife in care, my time is better spent on more useful tasks such as caring for the aforementioned wildlife.

Please, I beg of you, show some true leadership and cease all logging in all NSW native forests urgently. Already the opportunity to make a gradual transition has been all but lost, time is running out for our forests and all the species that exist within them and for the health and well-being of future generations of Australians.

Yours sincerely

Natalie Meyer