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Do you want your submission marked as confidential? *	No
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Which of the following best describes you? *	Environmental organisation
Which draft PNF Code are you providing a submission on? *	All Codes

My comments

Submission re private Native forests 18 May 2020

On behalf of MEG Midcoast Environment Group

Thanks for giving us the chance to comment on this issue

I will address these matters fairly broadly because you have undoubtedly received many submissions detailing specific issues and objectives.

In my view, the main enemies of our natural environment emanating from human attitudes and behavior are ignorance, greed and the desire to control nature.

Our natural environment is the most unique and precious part of Australia. It is Australia of course because without the land, water and air our country would not exist.

The main point is – do we value our natural ‘assets’ because they are useful to us – for logging, mining, fishing, tourism, farming etc?

The problem for landholders is that they believe they own all the natural and introduced assets on their property.

The problem for environmental protectors is that they are trying to speak for the voiceless- koalas, plants, trees, aquatic and marine species

Is our environment valuable for its intrinsic worth? Because there is nowhere else in the world except our country that provides the wildlife of Australia – the flora and fauna, the wetlands and marine landscapes, the vegetation

and habitat? Except zoos or museums, but they're not really 'natural' are they?

Offsetting the accelerating destruction of bits and pieces of unique and beautiful (not an indecent word in our vocabulary) native vegetation, reefs and rivers is a cynical and often futile exercise.

If Australians were told that they were going to have to leave their country but that loss of their homeland would be offset by being transported to the Gobi desert..it's a wideopen space after all – how would we react?

That's exactly what's happening to so many of our native species (birds, insects, reptiles, grasses, bush etc etc) and they rarely manage to feel at home in their new surroundings. Is an ecology transferrable? I don't believe so.

We feel that the recent bushfires, floods and other natural phenomenon (though anthropomorphic influences contributed) have not done most of our flora and fauna any favours. But is that a reason to destroy the rest of our forests and bush – what's left of the habitat of koalas, birds, insects, reptiles, unique plants and trees?

In relation to the PNF limits on removing native forests is the last hope of our native species of all kinds. This is not the time – and there should never be such a time – to reduce restrictions on development and destruction. "Green tape" is much more important than the blue and white tape police put round a crime scene. It is there to stop people committing crimes against the natural environment.

As a country we should be proud of defending our unique natural world – instead we often seem to be proud of exploiting and eradicating everything that makes Australia so splendid.

When the commonwealth Acts encourage this pride and stewardship to guard and protect our natural world, then they should override State and Territory laws if those are destructive and shortsighted.

But if Commonwealth laws are used to stop states from protecting and caring for their natural environments – then they are bad laws. States like NSW also use their powers to stop some enlightened Councils from protecting their local environments. This is totally undemocratic.

Covid is being used as an excuse for destruction and myopic developments which will make it impossible for future governments or generations to remedy such vandalism. Old growth forests are uniquely important and their regrowth would take hundreds of years.

Landclearing on a massive scale is wiping out habitat and species and increasing erosion and heat and cold to extremes which in turn exacerbate destruction. Yes, climate does change when huge areas of once green natural growth (forests, wetlands, grasslands, bush) are replaced by ploughed land sown with monocultural crops. Or by concrete and hard surfaced for roads, housing and other structures. The removal of forests and other native vegetation reduces habitat and air quality.

Bad practices harm future prospects for forests and other ecologies: Logging practices and fire susceptibility in forests.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/06/compelling-evidence-logging-native-forests-has-worsened-australian-bushfires-scientists-warn>

Governments at all levels have a duty to increase prospects for our natural environment's survival not push it onto life support or into the morgue. Can't we think ahead? So much that is irreplaceable is being obliterated for short term so-called economic gain.

A healthy environment is an essential component of a healthy economy.

I have spoken to a fair few farmers and other landowners who say there are plenty of koalas and other native species on their properties and they feel that keeping the native habitat in no way detracts from their production and often enhances it. eg Kangas may be much less inclined to eat crops if they have plenty of edible bush. Same goes for other critters. There are many self-defeating farming practices which if turned around could make farms viable without chopping and spraying native vegetation.

All those involved in PNF could promote sustainable farming and intelligent forestry instead of encouraging felling and culling. PLEASE don't relax the rules - make them tougher to protect our native habitats and wildlife!

Attach your submission



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Logging and other destructive activities in Private Native Forestry should require a Development Application like all other large developments to ensure full environmental assessments and to give the local community a chance to raise their concerns.

- **There must be surveys for threatened species before logging so they can be protected.**
- **Local Land Services must ensure there is accurate and ecologically credible mapping of, and full protection for, Threatened Ecological Communities, rainforest, oldgrowth forest, wetlands, heathlands, and rock outcrops, along with buffers.**
- **At least 20m logging exclusions should be implemented around all streams, both mapped and unmapped. Recognition of vegetation as protecting water courses must be strengthened.**
- **Logging must be excluded from steep slopes over 25°.**
- **All trees over 80cm diameter (dbh) must be protected.**
- **Retained nectar feed trees must be large healthy mature trees.**
- **The proposed increase in logging intensity must not proceed.**
- **Clearfelling must not be allowed.**
- **Weeds must be managed and regeneration assured.**

Thanks to NEFA for this