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Do you want your submission marked as confidential? *	No
Do you want to receive future notifications and updates on the PNF Review? *	Yes
Which of the following best describes you? *	Environmental organisation
Which draft PNF Code are you providing a submission on? *	All Codes

My comments

Our concerns in summary:

Any logging plan must be approved by Local Land Services, including any variations, before logging. Under no circumstances should landholders be allowed to unilaterally vary plans with no accountability.

Landowners should be required to notify LLS if logging is suspended for more than a month and notified before it restarts. LLS needs to have responsibility for monitoring .

We STRONGLY BELIEVE and RECOMMEND that the following variations should be made to the draft Code/s:

- 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, old growth forest, wetlands, heathlands, and rock outcrops, along with buffers;
- At least 20m logging exclusions should be implemented around all streams, both mapped and unmapped;
- Logging must be prohibited on steep slopes over 25o;
- 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;
- Clear felling must be prohibited and severe penalties should apply for breaches;
- Weeds must be managed and regeneration assured;
- There needs to be an independent expert review of the criteria and methodology for remapping rainforest and old growth forest in a transparent and open process involving conservation groups.
- Rainforest and old growth forest must be subject to 50m buffer zones as an absolute minimum.

The protection and regeneration of what remains of our native forests, whether private or public, needs to be based on science and fact. We human beings as a species are facing an imminent existential threat. As long as we continue to interface with the environment in a hostile and aggressive manner, treating it as a mere commodity and viewing whatever does not have commodity value as 'waste', or a barrier to 'progress' (e.g. roads, urban development etc.), we are paving the way for our own demise.

Our native forests and all watercourses have already been reduced to mere shadows of their former selves, and we are seeing an alarming increase in species decline and extinctions. Insect populations are collapsing, and along with them the birds and animals which feed upon them. There is a direct correlation with the destruction of their habitat. Habitat destruction means that all wildlife must expend greater amounts of energy to find food and nesting habitats, must face greater competition across the board and is increasingly forced to interface with human beings and associated hazards (e.g. fences, cars and dogs). As their exposure to toxins and environments degraded by human activity increases, their ability to survive continues to decline. Even without factoring climate change into the equation, the ongoing habitat destruction alone is bringing about total devastation for our wildlife and overall environmental health and resilience.

As with all animals, our own survival as a species is integrally linked to the health and resilience of the natural environment. Without clean water, air and food we cannot survive. Human beings are ultimately dependent upon a healthy environment in order to access clean air, water and food. A large part of maintaining a healthy environment is the preservation of native forests. Leaving our native forests to grow and regenerate is one of the most significant things we can do to mitigate the impacts of climate change and drought, with minimal economic costs compared to those involved in the phasing out of fossil fuels.

Forest ecologists like Robert Kooyman and David Lindenmayer point out that the bushfires of 2019-2020 have destroyed a large percentage of our remaining forests/wildlife habitat. Our forests are increasingly prone to devastating bushfires because the trees which remain are mostly small and burn like kindling compared to the giant trees that have been removed during the past 150 years.

As human beings we are now feeling the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation and we face a future of lurching from one catastrophe to the next. The economic impact of these catastrophes will be far greater than any jobs lost as a result of limiting or even halting logging in our native forests. Logging should be replaced by forest management.

Additionally, our native forests have the potential to yield far greater value as genetic sources of beneficial food, fibre and medicinal materials. Unless we dramatically change course now, future generations will only ever know sparse and silent forests, devoid of most life and biodiversity, even replaced altogether with empty mono-culture stands of black butt extending for thousands of hectares as far as the eyes can see.

As NRG member Nat Meyer wrote:

“The quality of life, if not the very survival of future generations is at stake and is in our hands. We must show leadership and rise above politics and short term economics, or we will leave a legacy of misery and disaster behind us. We are all in this together. Will we recklessly exploit what remains in a last dash to benefit a few, whether economically or politically, at the expense of the future of entire generations?”

With hope for a sustainable future,

Scott Sledge
NRG President
