

**Submission  
No 171**

**INQUIRY INTO LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND  
FUTURE OF THE TIMBER AND FOREST PRODUCTS  
INDUSTRY**

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Submission To:

Long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry.  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000

From:

Peter Dav.

### My Background

I am located in a remote and forested part of NSW. My Wife and I run a wildlife sanctuary which is surrounded by the Tantawangalo State forest and South East Forests national park. We have been rescuing and rehabilitating native wildlife since 2015. I am active in monitoring, auditing and providing data and reports to the EPA NSW on logging operations in the Tantawangalo State forest. To date, I have provided several reports to the EPA NSW outlining Forestry Corporation NSW failure to adhere to their license under the RFA, IFOA and EPL which have resulted in FCNSW receiving fines. The latest being in 2020 amounting to over \$30,000 which is most likely the largest financial penalty applied to FCNSW for breaching their license.

The Tantawangalo state forest is a fragile montane and mostly wet forest, that is between 900 and 1000 meters above sea level. The forest includes large rocky outcrops and cliffs, wetlands, heathlands and bogs and is home to threatened and endangered species, including powerful owls, yellow bellied gliders and greater gliders. Koalas and Quolls once were plentiful, however are now most likely locally extinct. According to FCNSW documents, all compartments within the forest are recorded as containing high quality habitat.

All of the logging operations undertaken in this forest are either Selective or Thinning operations. The names that describe these operations are purposely misleading.

Thinning operations, according to FCNSW documents, only smaller trees are to be removed in an attempt to open up the forest to allow remaining trees to increase in size. This not what occurs in these thinning operations. I have witnessed large trees being taken, with the smaller trees being just pushed over and left in piles. In these thinning operations, the forest canopy has been reduced by as much as 70%. All of the understory has been destroyed, crushed under the heavy logging machines. Logging slash and debris now covering what was once a forest floor. This debris can be metres high and due to the removal of most of the forest canopy, dries out quickly posing a fire risk to neighbouring properties. A thinning operation is the only time all of the logged trees can be used as pulp logs.

Selective operations are where selected trees are not logged! In times past, trees were selected for their timber quality and only these trees were taken. Under the IFOA, all trees can be logged, with only a small quantity of larger trees left for habitat, feed or as a recruitment tree to replace habitat trees as they age. I have seen the affect these selective logging operations have on the fragile ecosystems of the Tantawangalo forest. Ten or twenty years after logging, the forest is still a bare place, where it is impossible for native fauna to survive.

Compartments logged in the Tantawangalo state forest are not replanted or reseeded they never have been. It is left to nature to repair the damage caused by these smash and grab logging operations.

Regardless of the logging operation type, for decades afterwards, logged compartments and coups become wastelands, devoid of native fauna. Feral animals like foxes, move in to these modified environments, where they find it easy to prey on any surviving wildlife. I have seen massive weed infestations occur, where Scotch thistle is the main flora growing. Following a 2019 thinning operation in compartment 2407 of the Tantawangalo State forest, I warned the EPA that

the large amount of debris left on the forest floor, had the potential to cause a more intensive bushfire, which was a major concern given the State was in the middle of a severe drought. My fears became a reality, when in January 2020 a fire started in grassland just north of the Tantawangalo forest. The fire entered the forest and quickly spread through the logged compartments. Within days the fire had destroyed most of the northern part of the forest and had engulfed my property. In the southern compartments of the forest, that had been heavily logged in 2016, the Black Jack Mountain bushfire entered and quickly spread destroying my neighbours home. My wife and I stayed to defend our home, I did not see or hear from any Forestry Corporation fire crews. I do not believe there was any effort to stop the fire from entering the forest or spreading through it.

The logging of State forests, is destroying ecosystems that do not recover. Native flora and fauna are not recovering after logging, and the huge amount of slash and debris left after logging is a severe bushfire threat to those of us who live nearby.

Logging of our native forests must end!