



29 October 2020

The Hon. John Barilaro MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional New South Wales
Minister for Industry and Trade.

cc Mr Matt Kean MP

Dear Minister Barilaro,

REF: 20/34#74

In reference to your letter of 16.09.2020 concerning the future of the forestry sector in NSW, we offer the following comments.

1. JOBS

You state the forestry sector supports more than 22,000 jobs with over 40% of these located in regional areas. That means that 60% of forestry activities occur in metropolitan areas and we wonder where such forestry jobs exist.

According to the 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, 13 out of 18 industries employed more people than Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing combined (Table 1).

2. SUPPLY OF RENEWABLE MATERIALS

You state that 'we' need to ensure an ongoing wood supply; this would depend on trees growing 'on demand'. Can orders be met, practically and ethically, from trees burnt by the 2019-2020 fires? You state that we need to use renewable building materials, but these cannot be sourced from burnt forests which shamefully continue to be logged after the inferno.

Apart from Australian scientists finding that logging native forests has worsened Australian bushfires¹, Professor David Lindenmayer, one of the world's leading forest ecologists, states that "...remnant stands of old-growth forests should become the focus of targeted protection from both logging and fire". Professor Lindenmayer² adds, "When so much is being lost to fire there is no certainty of supply of the resource".

Focus is warranted on the plantation sector in terms of benefits to the economy, jobs, being a renewable source, and being less environmentally destructive.

3. EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AND GROSS VALUE ADDED (GVA)

The document which serves as a fire impact addendum to the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) for Far South Coast,³ indicates that "80% of forest burnt, with 10% forestry GVA decline" and that there has been non-recoverable tree damage and direct damage to Eden

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/06/compelling-evidence-logging-native-forests-has-worsened-australian-bushfires-scientists-warn>

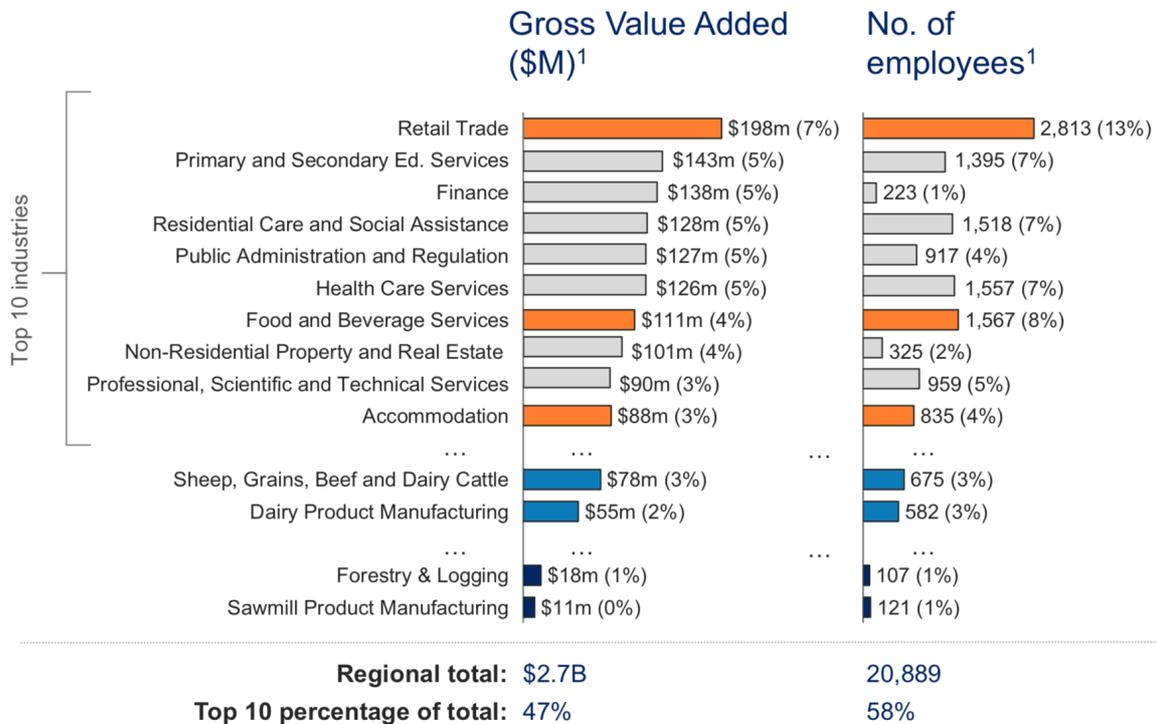
² <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/logging-in-fire-ravaged-native-forests-no-longer-sustainable-study-20200518-p54u4k.html>

³ [https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/Far South Coast REDS fire impact addendum%20C2%A0.pdf](https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/Far%20South%20Coast%20REDS%20fire%20impact%20addendum%20C2%A0.pdf)

woodchip mill. This does not uphold your comment for the use of renewable building materials from native forests.

Before 2020 only ~30 people were employed in the Eden chipmill.

The chart below from the REDS document, lists the prime employment industries and growth areas in the Far South Coast. It shows that, here, forestry and logging contribute **1%** of the GVA and its employment rate is **a tiny 1%**: comparatively almost negligible.



Regional NSW

1. 2015-16 CERD Input-Output tables | Note: Dairy Cattle GVA estimated using ABARES he

Yet the RED document illogically also focuses on **growth** in the Forestry sector. Firstly, burnt trees don't regrow at a calculable rate; and, secondly, **this focus takes away from growth in other sustainable industries which employ more local people and add greater value to the economy.**

4. COMPARATIVE VALUE

You state that regional employment in all its forms is far greater, and has a higher growth rate, in sectors such as Education, Health, Technology, Tourism, and not forestry – so your argument in this respect, supports the statistic of forestry's negligible benefit.

As the native forest logging sector in the South East of NSW has comparatively poor GVA and few jobs, this justifies the implementation of new policies to allow the native forests to recover.

5. HISTORIC NATURE

You state that "...it is a historically important stable industry". Historically, science has proved that native forest logging is environmentally UNSTABLE. That statement ignores the science that trees left in the ground help combat a changing climate by continuing to capture carbon. Historically, it ranks with defunct sectors such as whaling and salmon farming.

Because something is termed 'historic', it doesn't mean it is appropriate for the 21st century. Most politicians' opinions of the forestry sector do not match its applicability in today's social conscience, nor does it comply with today's scientific knowledge.

Any form of “business as usual” in native forest logging is not rational and it needs to end in favour of more profitable local industries and plantation forests.

Our communities witnessed the horror of fire sweeping throughout our forests and we believe we need to throw everything into preserving what is left. Fire everywhere, travelled through the place like a bat out of hell, destroyed homes, burnt forests, lives changed forever. People lost homes, heart, spirit, keepsakes, farm machinery, cattle, sheep, horses, crops, gardens, sheds, rainwater tanks, shops and livelihoods. Places we loved became charred ruins. Wildlife we valued suffered terribly.

The whole experience was like an apocalypse. The only thing that comes close to it is the aftermath of a logging event in a native forest. Splintered stumps, treetops lying waste, piles of tree-bark abandoned, branches lying everywhere – nature’s carbon sequestration cycle interrupted. But it is what you don’t see and don’t hear that leaves the worst impression: no wallabies, no bats, no gliders, no wombat burrows, no birdcalls...an eerie necropolis.

We’ve witnessed and experienced enough horror without seeing the continued destruction of what is left of our native forests. Could you please consider these facts and comments and end native forest logging immediately... whatever it takes?

Your sincerely



Dr Bronte Somerset (Educ.)
Secretary, South East Region Conservation Alliance.

Table 1: Industry of Employment - Proportion of Employed Persons ⁴ – Census 2016

RED: The 14 industries (NSW) which employ **more** than Agriculture, forestry and fishing combined.

1. Agriculture, forestry and fishing (%)	2.1
2. Mining (%)	0.9
3. Manufacturing (%)	5.8
4. Electricity, gas water and waste services (%)	0.9
5. Construction (%)	8.4
6. Wholesale trade (%)	3.1
7. Retail trade (%)	9.7
8. Accommodation and food services (%)	7.1
9. Transport, postal and warehousing (%)	4.7
10. Information media and telecommunications (%)	2.2
11. Financial and insurance services (%)	4.9
12. Rental, hiring and real estate services (%)	1.8
13. Professional, scientific and technical services (%)	8.1
14. Administrative and support services (%)	3.5
15. Public administration and safety (%)	6.0
16. Education and training (%)	8.4
17. Health care and social assistance (%)	12.5
18. Arts and recreation services (%)	1.5
Other services (%)	3.7
Total persons employed (no.)	3 380 332

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https://itt.abs.gov.au/itt/r.jsp?RegionSummary®ion=1&dataset=ABS_REGIONAL_ASGS2016&geoconcept=ASGS_2016&measure=MEASURE&datasetASGS=ABS_REGIONAL_ASGS2016&datasetLGA=ABS_REGIONAL_LGA2019®ionLGA=LGA_2019®ionASGS=ASGS_2016