

SETA Submission to the Eurobodalla Shire Council Regarding the Motion to End Native Forest Harvesting to be put to Council on 9 August 2022

SETA members apologise for not being able to attend the Eurobodalla Council meeting on 9 August 2022. Members potentially affected by the anti-native forest campaign have requested I make a submission on their behalf.

Employment

Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Shire Councils have similar workforce trends, as fulltime jobs in fishing, forestry, agriculture and other industries have declined and the shires have moved more to tourism/service economies. As 2021 census statistics are not yet available, key points are drawn from: <https://profile.id.com.au/eurobodalla/employment-status>

Total employment in the Eurobodalla Shire has grown from 12,529 in 2011 to 12,979 in 2016, **an average increase of 90 jobs per year**, which might provide employment for less than half the high school leavers, let alone other job seekers moving into the shire.

Full-time employment had declined from 47.3 to 46.4 percent of the workforce. The average full-time employment rate for regional NSW in 2016 was 55.2 percent.

For over thirty years, activists campaigning to stop native forest harvesting across NSW have promised lost jobs would be replaced by new jobs, particularly in eco-tourism. Small regional communities from Urbenville to Eden have suffered the social and economic consequence, as the promised replacement jobs failed to materialise.

Employment status							
Eurobodalla Shire - Persons (Usual residence)							
	2016			2011			Change
Employment status	Number	%	Regional NSW %	Number	%	Regional NSW %	2011 to 2016
Employed	12,979	92.9	93.4	12,529	92.5	93.9	+450
Employed full-time	6,482	46.4	55.2	6,409	47.3	56.7	+73
Employed part-time	6,224	44.6	36.3	5,810	42.9	35.0	+414
Hours worked not stated	273	2.0	1.9	310	2.3	2.1	-37
Unemployed (Unemployment rate)	986	7.1	6.6	1,014	7.5	6.1	-28
Looking for full-time work	608	4.4	3.9	647	4.8	3.8	-39
Looking for part-time work	378	2.7	2.7	367	2.7	2.4	+11
Total labour force	13,965	100.0	100.0	13,543	100.0	100.0	+422

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016*. Compiled and presented by [.id](#) (informed decisions).
Please refer to specific data notes for more information

Consumption

As the NSW and Australian hardwood supplies have declined, exports fill the gap in supply. While there are ongoing multimillion campaigns decrying the environmental impacts of native forest harvesting in Australia, little attention is paid to the environmental impacts of harvesting in less regulated countries.

In many developing countries, forest restoration at home has led to deforestation abroad, according to a 2010 study in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS).

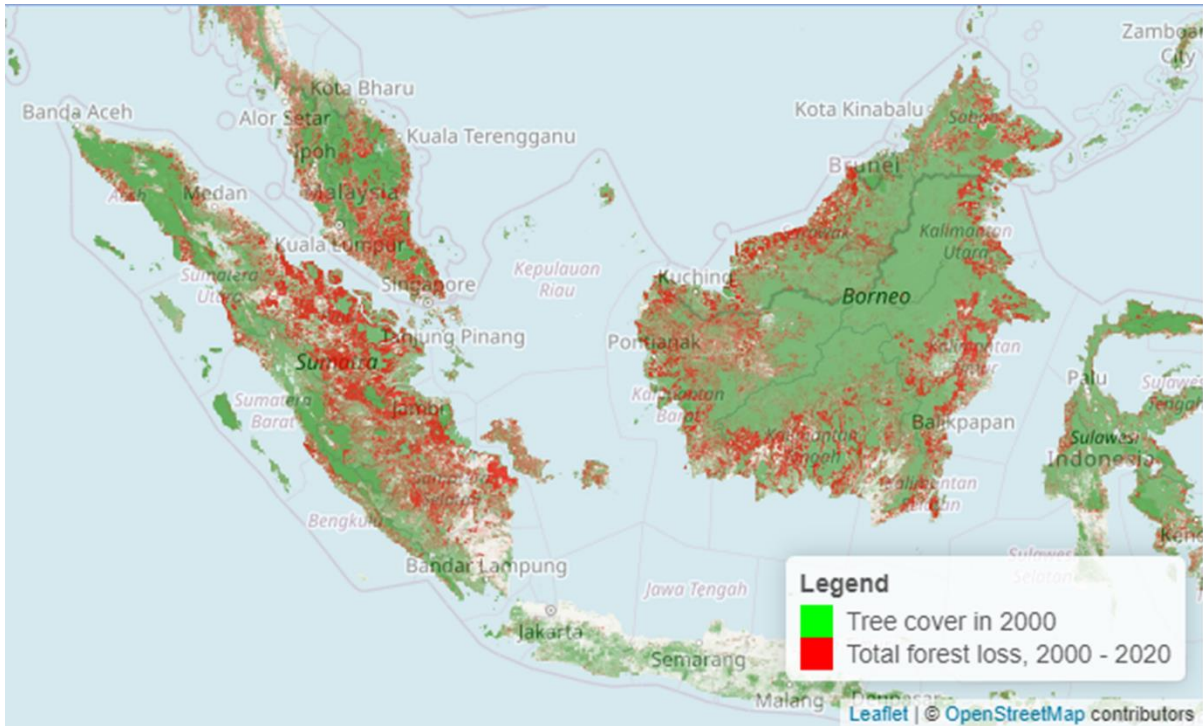


SouthEastTIMBERassociation

admin@southeasttimberassociation.com

It is the view of SETA members that the deliberate transfer of the impacts of our hardwood consumption offshore is selfish, unethical and immoral. See photos below.

One of the Alternative Hardwood Supply Sources



Source Frontier Economics

Harvested Rainforest Growing in a Peat Swamp was Converted to Plantation



southeasttimberassociation.com OR find us on Facebook

Economic Report Advocates for Closure of the Southern NSW Native Forest Industry

It is noted that on 22 June 2022, "*Deirdre Rose and Professor Andrew Macintosh, Frontier Economics*" appeared at a briefing of council. Consequently, your attention is drawn to the following attachments to this submission.

SETA has written to both ANU law professor Macintosh (Attachment 1) and Ms Deirdre Rose of Frontier Economics (Attachment 2). Despite follow up emails, Professor Macintosh and Ms Rose have refused to respond to SETA concerns over their fundamentally flawed report. Just one of the flaws in the report follows. See Attachment 3 for more details.

A major flaw in the report shows about \$80 million dollars (approximately 80% of the alleged total benefit of closing the industry) of the annual economic benefit arises from avoided harvest, haul and processing costs. This \$80 million has been accounted for in the cost-benefit analysis as a "benefit".

These operations are an expense paid for by timber processors, out of the \$100 million in revenue that flows from the sale of forest products. What are claimed to be avoided costs, are actually income that will be stripped from regional families, businesses and economies.

Harvesting and Bushfire Risk

SETA understands that Professor Lindenmayer has not provided a copy of his presentation to council on 8 June 2022. Given recent media coverage, we have assumed that Professor Lindenmayer would have continued his advocacy to close the native forest industry resulting from his view, that logging increases bushfire risk to communities and any fuel reduction burning should only be in the vicinity of human assets.

Some historical context to the rolling barrage of 21st century high intensity bushfire disasters is contained in Attachment 4. Attachment 5 provides some examples where fuel management provides ecological benefits before, during and after high intensity bushfires.

Attachment 6 examines in more detail some of Professor Lindenmayer's opinions and poses a series of questions to him and other fire academics that support his opinions.

Unfortunately, much of the modelling detail is not readily available to the public.

Two examples contained in a recent CSIRO fire research paper, provide a small insight into potential flaws in current bushfire modelling. The data in the CSIRO model used an average fine fuel load of 8 tonnes per hectare. Typical fine fuel loads across much of the unburnt forests of Eurobodalla Shire would range from 20 to up to 40 tonnes per hectare. See the photo below. The CSIRO model also failed to include the shrubby understorey ladder fuels.

Underestimating actual fine fuel loads by 200 to 500 percent and ignoring increasing quantities of ladder fuels potentially justify limiting or stopping of fuel reduction burning. As fine and ladder fuels are key drivers of bushfire spread and intensity, failing to manage these fuels on all land tenures increases the risk of high intensity bushfires causing catastrophic damage to biodiversity and human lives and assets.



Fine Fuel Sample (less than 6mm) of 20 Tonnes per Hectare



Biodiversity in State Forests and Conservation Reserves

Aside from an alleged increased risk of bushfires, activists argue that stopping native forest harvesting will protect various species, including koalas from extinction. At 20 June 2021, 7,590,000 hectares of available public land (80.83%) was in the NSW conservation reserve system. There was 1.8 million hectares of native forest in state forests. We are to expected to accept without question that permanent protection that flows from cessation of harvesting will ensure species survival in the long term.

The NSW NP&WS Zero Extinctions Report September 2021 notes: *“There is evidence that the overall decline in biodiversity in NSW is occurring even in the national park estate. Key threats affecting threatened species populations in national parks include feral predators and other feral animals; invasive weeds; changed fire regimes; and a range of impacts associated with climate change. On park declines are occurring, or have occurred, in a range of threatened species including small- to medium-sized mammals, woodland birds, koalas and gliders, frogs and a range of plant species.”*

While native forest harvesting has been demonised as THE THREAT to biodiversity by anti-native forest activists for over 30 years, it is becoming increasingly clear that poor land, including lack of fire mitigation and other threat management must be addressed.

Surveys by the NP&WS showed koala occupancy in the Murrumbidgee SF was double and that in Mumbulla SF was triple, the occupancy of that in the adjoining Biamanga NP. Over 70 percent of the koala occupancy was in regrowth stands following integrated harvesting. Despite these results, in 2016, the NSW environment minister announced that koalas in the Murrumbidgee and Mumbulla state forests would be protected in a new flora reserve. See Attachment 7 for more details.



Other examples that show dedication of new parks or cessation harvesting do not guarantee biodiversity protection include:

Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isoodon obesulus obesulus*)

The following extract is from the 5 May 2016 Threatened Species Scientific Committee advice to the Minister.

Available quantitative data are summarised in the table below.

Population	State	Decline
Ben Boyd National Park	NSW	44% (1999 to 2008)
Nadgee Nature Reserve	NSW	47% (1999 to 2008)
Port Campbell	Vic	>70% (past 10 years)
Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve	Vic	100% (extirpated around 2006)
Mt Lofty Ranges – northern metapopulation	SA	100% (extirpated around 2009)

Following assessment of the information, the Committee considers that the southern brown bandicoot (eastern) is continuing to decline across its range. Existing habitat fragmentation exacerbates threats continuing to operate over much of its range, particularly predation by foxes and feral cats, too frequent and extensive burning, and further habitat clearing and fragmentation. All of the available quantitative estimates for recent population trends exceed or approach a 50 percent reduction in numbers over a recent 10 year period (see table above). For

Imlay Mallee (*Eucalyptus imlayensis*)

Since discovery of the Imlay Mallee in 1979 and despite being permanently protected since 1972, the population has declined from 70- 80 plants to less than 50.

Long-footed Potoroo (*Potorous longipes*)

The Long-footed Potoroo, located in the South East Forests National Park and East Gippsland, was listed as critically endangered in NSW in the final determination of the NSW Scientific Committee in October 2015.

Extensive surveys were undertaken across the range of the LFP during 2016/17. Over 25,000 nights of survey using infra-red cameras failed to detect any Long-footed Potoroos.

Conclusion

Native forest management is a very complex issue.

Native forest harvesting in NSW and Australia generally has been demonised by more than 30 years of activist campaigns. In that time scare campaigns targeting native forest harvesting have helped activist charities raise hundreds of millions of dollars to fund their campaigns.

SETA respectfully suggests that councillors do not allow the Eurobodalla Shire Council to be dragged into this eco-political campaign, by those councillors who have an affinity with the activist movement.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Rutherford

SETA Secretary

