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What could \$1.74M a year do for the Bega Shire community?

NSW taxpayers were forced to fork out \$1.74 million to log native forest in the Bega Shire over the past financial year, a new analysis by the Nature Conservation Council has revealed.

Taxpayers lost \$29 million across the past two years logging native forest in NSW¹, because the taxpayer-owned NSW Forestry Corporation sells logs, mostly for woodchips, for less than it can source and deliver them. This information is contained in the NSW Forestry Corporation annual reports.

NCC CEO Jacqui Mumford said the loss equated to \$56,250 for every "compartment" (the industry term for an area of forest) logged by taxpayers.

"Taxpayers logged 31 areas in Bega Shire, and at an average loss of \$56,250 for every area logged, that's \$1.74 million," Ms Mumford said.

"This logging is completely unprofitable and wasteful compared to profitable plantation logging. Why should sawmills get cheap inputs from the taxpayer, who is running a business at a loss?"

"The Bega community deserves to be asked: what would you like to invest this money into? How would you help the local community with \$1.74M if this money were not wasted turning the lungs of NSW into woodchips?"

"Perhaps this \$1.74 million could have been invested into employing 17 extra nurses in Bega, or 17 more teachers, firefighters or police. Maybe the local community could have had an extra medical machine or updated local schools or halls."

"Just 5% of forest logged becomes timber. Taking trees from native forest is incredibly wasteful and expensive, and 90% of the jobs in the industry are already in the profitable plantation sector."

"It's time to fix this."

Ms Mumford noted that Environment Minister James Griffin had, at last week's Environment Ministers' debate hosted by NCC, said he'd met with the CFMMEU on the South Coast recently.

Regarding a discussion about transitioning the remaining jobs in the South Coast native logging industry, Minister Griffin said: "If you want to have a real discussion on what a transition would like, if we are willing to have that as a community, then it does mean talking to communities and industries affected. I met with the CFMMEU... on the South Coast. They do want to have this discussion... there are opportunities to reflect the complete value from carbon sequestration and also recreational values that those forests represent and I think that is something we should be absolutely looking at."



The areas logged in Bega Valley Shire Council were made up of 20 at East Boyd, six at Nadgee and five at Yambulla.

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¹ Forestry Corporation NSW, Annual Report 2021-22, P.9

Available at: <https://www.forestrycorporation.com.au/about/pubs/corporate/annual-report/forestry-corporation-of-nsw-annual-report-2021-22>