

*Tracking land-use change in
remnant native forest within
NSW, Australia:*

*A temporal and spatial
journey*

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*Active native forest
conversion,
Wild Cattle Creek,
Northern NSW*

1. Context: forest loss & the 'monoculturalisation' of NSW forests
2. Expansion of plantations in NSW
3. Clearance of native vegetation & forests in NSW plantations: the PRA, Code and certification standards
4. Case study: what's happening on the ground – Conglomerate SF
5. Results & Conclusions
6. What you can do: citizen science



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- Native forests are being converted to plantations
- Native forests are being simplified (eucalypt plantations)
- Forest remnants inside plantations are being cleared
- Eucalypt plantations are being simplified to monoculture
- Eucalypt plantations are hybridizing with natural forest
- Ending native forest logging will not stop this:
 - If the current plantation mindset persists, (soft- or hardwood), conversion will continue
- Timber is a crop, not a forest, and belongs in the agricultural landscape
- Native forests and eucalypt plantations have more value for ecosystem services (climate, biodiversity) than timber: restoration not degradation.



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THE PLANTATION MINDSET

Plantation Regulation occurs through:

- **The Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999**

*an area of land on which the predominant number of trees or shrubs forming, or expected to form, the canopy are trees or shrubs that have been **planted** (whether by sowing seed or otherwise)*

a natural forest is not a plantation for the purposes of this Act. However, an area is not a natural forest merely because it contains some native trees or shrubs that have not been planted.

- **The Plantations and Reafforestation (Code) Regulation 2001**



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Plantations and Reafforestation Code

- Overseen by DPI and approved by DPI
- Not subject to public consultation
- No role for EPA (unless threatened species are affected (but 'not possible, it's a plantation')

Does not permit clearing of remnant vegetation (conversion) unless

- The area is 'degraded'
- Less than 1 ha,
- Unless it impacts plantation design or intrudes into another plantation
 - At the discretion of the Director General
- If area of vegetation to be cleared is more than 10% of entire area or more than 30 ha it must be 'offset' (like for like, or better)

In other words 'no conversion in NSW' is a **legal fiction**



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Table 1 Combined totals of remnant, cleared and retained regrowth/offset vegetation in all units investigated

Condition	Size (ha)
Remnant	37.11
Cleared	12.59
Retained	12.15

Note: areas of less than .1 ha (remnant, cleared, or retained regrowth/offset may be shown on images supplied, but have not been counted)

Table 2 Combined totals of current and year 2000 units investigated

Condition	Size	% Current	% 2000
Remnant	37.11	33.77	39.09
Cleared	12.59	11.45	13.26
Retained	12.15	11.05	12.80

Table 3 Totals of remnant, cleared and retained vegetation as a percentage of combined (current, year 2000)

Current	Size (ha)	Year 2000	Size
62108	10.9	127	10.4
62109	2.63	129	0.94
62111	2.99	141	2.28
62110	23.2	138	17.3
8764	1.97	139	1.97
62118	52.3	157	49.3
62120	15.9	164	0.7
		173	5.1
		165	5.58
		158	1.35
Total	109.89		94.92

- More remnant vegetation is cleared than retained/offset
- Retained/offset forest is sourced from post-clearing regrowth (i.e. not like for like or better).
- Current units are generally larger than in 2000, and there has been a net increase due to boundary changes
- Native forest has been annexed from adjacent state forest
- Cleared remnant vegetation includes old-growth, rainforest
- NSW has 87,000 ha of hardwood plantations (ABARES, 2020).
 - *If these figures are indicative of other locations large areas of remnant native forest could be affected*

What you can do

‘No conversion in NSW’ is a **legal fiction** and it’s up to us to prove it

- Be part of a ‘citizen science’ initiative with Tim and
- Adopt a plantation
 - Learn how to use Google Earth and aerial photography to spot conversion
 - Lodge an complaint, and take legal action if it has happened, and importantly
 - Prevent it, if it is planned
- Your work will be part of a project to
 - Help build an online tool to visualise the logging happening in NSW, and
 - The impacts on biodiversity, Koalas, and threatened species,
 - With real time updates, for communities, researchers, activists and campaigners



THANK YOU

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