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The Wilderness Society's contention that native forest timber production enhances global warming (8/11) highlights the dangers of single-issue activism setting the environmental agenda.

Their claims are based on presumptions of permanent deforestation and unsustainability that are irrelevant to the Australian or Victorian context where timber production is limited to within less than 10% of forests being logged and regenerated on a sustainable cycle.

Whilst unlogged forests are valuable carbon sinks, sustainable timber production within designated zones can add substantially to this. The concept of sustainability dictates that harvested carbon transferred into wood products or lost to the atmosphere is replaced in vigorous new growth throughout the forest in previously harvested areas.

The enhanced sequestration of vigorous post-logging regrowth over and above the slow or static sequestration of older forests allows Victorian native forest timber production to provide an overall net gain in carbon storage that is currently estimated to be 7 - 8 times greater than the emissions being saved by wind farms. Losing this benefit by closing the native forest industry would be an environmental tragedy that would largely counteract government and community initiatives to embrace cleaner energy.

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