

NAME REDACTED

Submission ID: 204794

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**Organisation:** N/A

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**Location:** New South Wales

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**Supporting materials uploaded:** N/A

Submission date: 10/13/2024 12:09:52 PM

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**Topic 1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW**

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Forestry is a science which inherently aims to achieve sustainability. Most of the state's public forests were gazetted approximately 100 years ago and have been managed using forestry practices ever since. The forests we see today, along with the values and resources we obtain from them are a testimony to the sustainability of forestry operations in the past several decades. There have been significant political changes in the past 50 years which have drastically reduced the extent of our state forests and at the same time the demand for timber has continued to rise. Consequently, the areas of forest still available for timber production are being cut more intensively now than ever and it is highly likely that the current rate of timber harvesting is unsustainable. To make it sustainable the impact either needs to be spread out over a larger extent or the intensity needs to decrease (reducing supply).

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**Topic 2. Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values**

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Forestry operations are constantly adjusted to mitigate any risks to these values, often excluding operations from an area to ensure there is no impact.

Aboriginal cultural heritage values play a key role in many state forests either through protection of sites, engagement with aboriginal groups, permits or cultural burning. Aboriginal cultural heritage is being recognised more and more when it comes to decisions in forest management. Threatened species and ecological communities are also a key focus when carrying out operations and constitute a significant portion of the time and effort committed to operational planning and enactment. Due to the potential impact that native forest logging can have on a species, there is an obligation to carry out multiple ecological surveys and monitoring programs to ensure any potential impact on environmental values can be mitigated. There are also constant research programs being undertaken in state forests to improve our understanding of the populations, densities and behaviours of our threatened species.

This information is publicly available but rarely promoted. It is important that the industry maintains and improves its transparency but also directs stakeholders to the resources available for monitoring forestry operations.

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**Topic 3. Demand for timber products, particularly as relates to NSW housing, construction, mining, transport and retail**

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The demand for timber products is going up and as alternative materials become unviable this rate of increase will accelerate. Timber can be used for a wide range of products and new research and innovations are frequently adding to its utility.

Currently, softwood plantation predominantly caters for new housing. Hardwood plantations are less widespread but are mostly used for the production of powerline poles, milled timber and veneer.

Unfortunately, not all products can be sourced from plantations; this is where native forest logging fills the gaps. Heavy construction girders, high durability timbers (used in fencing, decking,

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cladding, wharfage), marine piles and other specialty timbers are all a primary focus in native forest logging operations.

Timber is the most renewable and environmentally friendly material for each of these products to be made of and the demand for these products will not decrease.

Conversely, with developments in mining techniques and the eventual scaling back of mining activities. The demand for timber used in mining applications is also likely to decrease. This is one of the few settings where we see a reducing demand for timber.

#### **Topic 4. The future of softwood and hardwood plantations and the continuation of Private Native Forestry in helping meet timber supply needs**

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The softwood and hardwood plantation estates will need to keep growing to keep up with future timber demands irrespective of whether or not native forest logging continues. This poses a problem for several reasons.

A productive and economically viable plantation requires good soil and climate to grow and most of the previously cleared areas with good soil and climate is used for agriculture. Attempts at agroforestry have been made in the past, many with success but it is not possible on a broad scale industrial level. Profit a pendre plantations funded by carbon credits have also been implemented in the past however many of these areas are unsuitable for a timber plantation and have been poorly managed.

The exotic softwood plantations were often established on sites that could not produce a suitable native product. This has been a tremendous boon to the state's infrastructure and economy.

However, it is no longer acceptable to clear native forest for the establishment of plantation and consequently there has been very little expansion of the plantation estate in recent years.

Private native forestry offers all the advantages of native forestry but is far less monitored and regulated. All native forest operations should fall under the same governing principles, laws and regulations irrespective of the tenure they are on.

Both softwood and hardwood plantation are heralded as the future of timber production, widely believed to be the most environmentally friendly source of timber. However, it is often overlooked that these areas offer very little to their local environments as they consist of a monoculture crop of a single age class. The trees within the plantation cannot be utilised for habitat in the form of hollows or as a diverse native food source (especially in the exotic pine softwood plantations). Plantations are intensively managed being clear-fallen every forty years creating large areas of uninhabitable land. This is all in contrast to native forest logging which maintains the species diversity and variety in age classes allowing the native species to remain in the areas after it has been logged.

Expansion in the productive area of the plantation estates will certainly be welcomed to improve the timber supply to keep up with demands. However, any such expansion will likely be to the detriment of agriculture and should not be solely relied on for the supply of timber. Native forest harvesting should be treated as a supplement to the timber supplied from plantation forestry.

#### **Topic 5. The role of State Forests in maximising the delivery of a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes and options for diverse management, including Aboriginal forest management models**

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The ideal management of a state forest is as a multi-use forest. Whilst accessibility and geography prevent many state forests from being able to achieve this, the Forestry Corporation of NSW makes a strong attempt at maximising positive outcomes for a range of forest uses. Generally speaking, forests closer to population centers have a wider range of uses other than logging such as recreation (camping, walking, hunting, horse riding, trail bikes and four-wheel-drives), events, permits (e.g. apiary, grazing, forest products). Many of these activities are prohibited in other

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tenures such as national parks. In forests further away from population centers, we see a reduction in these other uses but there is still the freedom to engage in these activities.

**Topic 6. Opportunities to realise carbon and biodiversity benefits and support carbon and biodiversity markets, and mitigate and adapt to climate change risks, including the greenhouse gas emission impacts of different uses of forests and assessment of climate change risks to forests**

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There is ample opportunity for these benefits to be explored within our native forests. State forests are actively managed and provide an ideal setting for these benefits and impacts to be explored.