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

As a long term resident of the north coast, living adjacent to a previous State Forest and interested in the habitat of our flora and fauna I have observed the forestry operations over the years. There were the Regional Forestry Agreements where State Forests were logged and then handed over to NPWS, then the Joint Ventures which in the north were a failure and rights have been changed back to the landowners and now cleared and used for grazing or retained for the use of the landholder. Currently the forests are being heavily logged and are far from sustainable. Forestry Corporation estimates of harvestable timber are consistently over estimated and yields have declined by 40% since 2010, protections for mature trees was removed in 2018 and logging intensified.

A major concern is the logging of mature trees which impacts the shelter, food resources and nesting resources critical to sustaining our native flora and fauna, including threatened species. The removal of the trees for timber also reduces groundcovers, resulting in erosion and pollution of streams and rivers, and increasing the risk of fire and invasion by weeds.

A book I have retained Fight for the Forest by Routley back in the 1970's has a cover photograph of the decimated forests at Eden just to be exported for wood chips. Many of the chapters reflect the mismanagement that continues today. Forestry must change practices to be environmentally and economically sustainable.

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

Forests that have been retained without the impacts of forestry are essential to our well being and for future generations. Many forests hold significance for Aboriginal culture and identity. A mature forest in good condition provides a feeling of well being for many cultures, a sense of calm, fresh air, clear waters, the song of the birds, buzz of the insects and the wind in the leaves.

The forests that are being logged on the North Coast hold incredible biodiversity and over 150 threatened species. The proposed Great Koala National Park is being heavily logged and impacting on populations of iconic Australian species. If NSW can't protect Koala habitat and populations what hope do less know species have of long term survival.

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

Figures provided state that, logging in native forests accounted for only 9% of the total log production in Australia in the year 2023. Native forest logging contributes only 2.4 million of the total 25 million cubic metres for that year

Half of the logs taken from native forests in 2023 were turned into woodchip and exported. Hardwood logs taken from plantations made up 8.5 million cubic metres, and just 8% of these logs were saw and veneer logs. 87% of hardwood plantation logs were exported as wood chips

- Hardwood sourced from native forests or plantations are no longer necessary for any of the uses identified in this section

Sawn and treated softwood logs and composite timber products made from softwoods can substitute for all current uses for native forest and plantation hardwoods

The market and demand for native forests is declining rapidly, the recent example of Essential Energy moving away from power poles harvested from native forests is just one example.

My observations of the housing and construction industry is not one of native hardwood timber but steel frames, composite beams, treated softwoods and concrete. Tradesmen consider hardwood a lot more difficult to work with.

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

Plantations, softwood and hardwood, should be utilised to provide for the production of logs for construction timbers. The plantation logs should not be produced and used for woodchip and exported. Plantations provide 91% of Australia's log production so why harvest native forests???

Private Native Forests need to be subject to more scrutiny, monitoring and regulation. Production and management details should be open for public scrutiny.

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

To maximise environmental outcomes native forest logging should cease as soon as transitions are put in place. Ecological benefits far outweigh a logged and unsustainable forest.

The timber industry should not be subsidised by the State government as it is proven to be an unviable industry. The native forest hardwood division of the Forestry Corporation operates at a loss that runs into tens of millions of dollars, at the expense of the NSW public. It also additionally receives tens of millions of dollars in regular equity injections.

Why should taxpayers be supporting a business that has proven to not be viable??

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

Projects to reduce carbon and increase biodiversity benefits have been introduced and generally resulted in failure to produce real outcomes.

Climate change is here and one of the proven actions is to retain healthy native forest.

NSW needs to prioritise change to stop logging of native forests, improve the health of the forests by well managed weed control programs, control of feral animals, ensure the protection of native forests through binding Conservation Agreements or transfer to the NPWS estate.

Native forest logging in NSW is estimated to release 3.6 million tonnes of carbon every year

Ending native forest logging would be the equivalent to removing 840 thousand cars from the roads per year

Logging in a native forest reduces the amount of stored carbon by more than half of the original value

Ending native forest logging will allow previously logged forests to regain lost carbon and make a significant contribution to meeting our emissions targets

Climate change is driving increased risks for forest health and continued logging in native forests is exacerbating that risk

Public submission

Forests that have not been logged are more resilient to the changing climate and catastrophic fires that are occurring as a consequence.