

ANNE REEVES

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**Location:** New South Wales

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

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In welcoming the commissioning of an Independent Panel to assist the NSW Government in developing a Forest Action Plan through consultation on the sustainability of current and future forestry operations, I am dismayed by the delay in addressing the ongoing draw down on public funds that have been required to support the native forest logging industry. It is more than thirty years since I was arrested in protest against logging of key high biodiversity old growth forests in South Eastern NSW. The protracted and extensive attempts by the then government to broker an acceptable 'compromise' in that and other regions of NSW have failed to deliver other than ongoing habitat decline: not a surprise to those of us who were aware of the inaccuracies in estimating the amount of potentially harvestable timber thereby signing off on unsustainable over-optimistic wood supply agreements. Over the years there have also been a remarkable number of failures to comply with environmental regulations destroying confidence in the Forestry Commission's capacity for management which does not bode well for the future.

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

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The environmental and cultural values of native forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values have been extensively documented. As the extent and fragmentation of these forests has continued these values become all the more precious and indeed crucial to protect if the commitments of government to halt biodiversity loss are to be met.

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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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It is important to factor in recognition that timber products are increasingly being met from plantation sources, particularly softwoods, as well as by other non-forest materials.

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**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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Ongoing supply of timber into the future, from public and private sources, should be sourced through plantations - effectively long rotation crops - grown on already cleared and suitable land. In Europe this has long been recognised, including through establishment of hardwoods, in multi-species as well as single species plantations. Many years ago I was brought up short at a Forest Futures conference which I attended as a delegate for The Australian Conservation Foundation when I cited a mixed use plantation example (specialist timber trees, understory, and recreation) I had recently visited in the UK which seemed to be in line with some advances being reported in NZ by the comment from Australian foresters that 'that wouldn't work here'. It is time NSW caught up with new (and some long established) approaches for better and more sustainable outcomes.

**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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Given the questionable track record of the Forestry Commission in complying with basic environmental regulations, including those intended to protect water catchment, slope, and riparian integrity a serious rethink on how and by whom State forests should be managed into the future. I submit that the remaining native forests should be managed under a protected area status, including provision for Aboriginal co-management arrangements, and low impact recreation.

**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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I submit:

- 1, Protected area status for the remaining native forests would enable its intrinsic stored carbon to be retained.
2. Plantations, destined as they are for ultimate harvesting, cannot be seen as other than a short-term sequestration option.
3. The introduction of 'markets' for biodiversity and carbon are fraught with problems and to date have failed to demonstrate successful outcomes.