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

I fully support an immediate end to native forest logging and a future industry based on sustainable plantations. I demand change now. It is time for a sustainable future, one that prioritises conservation, climate action, and community well-being over the destruction of our forests. The forestry industry must shift towards a model that protects our environment and our future. An immediate end to native forest logging in New South Wales would protect more than a million hectares of native forests, wilderness areas and core endangered species habitat. Logging in native forests is not sustainable. It removes the older trees, removing hollows and other habitat for forest wildlife, such as the Koala and the Great Glider. Current levels of logging are not sustainable and result in the removal of protections for key habitat. Continuing to log will likely contribute greatly to the extinction of forest dependent wildlife. The 2019/20 Black Summer fires have made this situation much more urgent and serious.

The New South Wales Government continues to delay the inevitable end of native forest logging; an industry that is a relatively small employer, subsidised by the taxpayer, and one that causes climate change and habitat loss. There is no future in destroying our native forests, ending native forest logging is the only way forward. I call for an immediate end to native forest logging and a transition of the industry to 100% plantation, both of which must happen in this term of government. Logging public native forests is costing the taxpayer millions and leading to permanent damage to our forests.

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

Native forest logging is driving the endangered Koala and Greater Glider to extinction so it cannot be described as sustainable. An immediate logging moratorium should be placed over core Greater Glider and Koala habitat while the Forestry Industry Action Plan process is underway. Logging cannot continue in public native forests without pushing the Koala, Greater Glider, Coastal Emu and many more forest-dependent wildlife much further towards extinction. Illegal logging practices, endangered species habitat destruction and totally inadequate pre-logging wildlife surveys have become the norm for Forestry Corporation. Under current rules, the volume of logs taken is considered more important than endangered species. This must stop now. Forests are vital refuges for many threatened species that rely on mature, intact forests. They also provide important services for the environment and regional communities, such as water quality and flow regulation, important for water quality; fishing and tourism; recreational values for locals and visitors; cultural and spiritual significance, especially for indigenous communities, and habitat connectivity, supporting biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Koalas are being targeted. With the process to create a Great Koala National Park across parts of the mid-north coast underway, Forestry Corporation NSW has been intensively targeting some of the most critical koala habitat remaining in Australia. Over 18,800 hectares of core koala habitat are currently being logged or are scheduled for logging within the Great Koala National Park assessment area. This works out to be around three times more logging operations per hectare

than the remainder of New South Wales. This ‘smash and grab’ operation is happening before our eyes within an area earmarked for future protection.

Greater Gliders are also being targeted. Over 11,000 hectares of Greater Glider refugia is currently being logged or is scheduled for logging in the near future. Four key examples of this targeting are Tallaganda, Badja, Styx River and Tuggolo State Forests. Community surveys over the last 12 months have found a total of 571 Greater Gliders and 154 den trees using on-ground spotlighting and thermal drone surveys. These surveys are ongoing, and indicate that there are high densities of Greater Gliders within these areas. If logging continues, many of these Greater Gliders will be killed.

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

There is no longer any need to log public native forests to build houses. Plantations can supply our high quality and composite timber products. Shifting to plantation timber reduces pressure on native forests, supporting sustainable industry practices.

An end to native forest logging sits well inside the realm of possibility. In fact, the transition to a plantation-based industry is nearly complete, with around 90% of Australia’s timber needs already being met by current plantations. The remaining 10% can easily be satisfied by stopping the export of unprocessed plantation wood and improving the domestic management of existing plantations.

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

Hardwood and softwood plantations already provide 91% of Australia’s log production.

Investment in hardwood plantation on already cleared land would supply timber products into the future.

Shifting to higher-value plantations can better meet timber needs.

Ending public forest subsidies would boost sustainable timber production on private lands.

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

Healthy native forests provide essential water resources.

Protecting and restoring State Forests will increase the economic value through tourism, carbon storage, job creation and recreational opportunities.

The Forestry Corporation is currently financially unsustainable, relying on government support and yielding less timber compared to managed plantations.

Diverse forest management, particularly Aboriginal models, can enhance the cultural and social value of forests.

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

The true value of our native forests comes from their critical role in carbon storage, providing a clean and reliable water supply, providing critical habitat, recreation and spiritual connection.

Logging native forests damages all these values.

Public submission

By logging in native forests large amounts of carbon are released, contributing to climate change. Stopping logging allows forests to recover, helping them store more carbon and supporting climate goals.

Healthy forests are essential for reducing the impacts of climate change like wildfires and drought. By stopping logging, forests can play a large role in mitigating climate risks and supporting opportunities in carbon markets.