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

There is nothing sustainable about logging native forests and trees and current forestry operations are far from sustainable. Native forests need to have protections reinstated to prevent all logging activities. Logging native forests removes carbon storage, increases, fire risk, damages waterways, removes habitats and promotes extinction. For example, there are 174 species in NSW that rely on hollows for dens and nests. We are currently experiencing a climate crisis that promotes more frequent and devastating disasters (e.g. Hurricane Helene and Milton in Florida). We know it is caused by carbon emissions into the atmosphere. DO NOT allow logging to remove our carbon storing forests. We know that the disasters that Australia is prone to are fires, drought (and floods). Do not allow the Forestry Corporation to remove the forests that mitigate and manage these intensifying disasters. There is nothing sustainable about logging native forests.

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

This point was partly covered in the section above. Healthy native forests provide habitats, support the health of waterways and store carbon (that is currently fuelling a climate crisis). Aboriginal cultures of NSW have a strong connection to native forests and their sovereignty over them was never ceded. Studies around the world show that returning control and decision making around forestry management to the first people groups results in dramatic improvements in ecosystems which has dramatic improvements for everyone else. For example, the Ashanika Tribe in Brazil regained control of their forests 32 years ago and have been so successful at achieving positive outcomes for everyone that they are now expanding their work and practices to an entire region. <https://apnews.com/article/brazil-indigenous-amazon-reforestation-ashaninka-climate-8f1311d0f1feb1125511b3c1662aeea>

In the Australian context, we have similar projects with Aboriginal communities all around Australia e.g. though the 'Country needs people' Aboriginal rangers program. Additionally, in Australia, we have a culture of breathing oxygen. That oxygen comes from trees. Logging practices that result in less mature native forest cover than previous years does not support a culture that like to breath oxygen.

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

Logging native forests is not necessary to meet demand for timber products. Native forest logging only contributed to 9% of total log production in Australia. Half of the logs taken from native forests in 2023 were turned into woodchips and exported. This independent panel should consider avenues for legal prosecutions against government officials and corporate bodies that oversaw that mulching and export. This clearly indicates that logging native forests is not about 'meeting demand' for essential housing. It is about profit for the few at the expense of us all. Harwood from native forests are no longer necessary for any of these purposes.

**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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Plantations already provide almost all of Australia's log production and should continue to do so. Plantations should prioritise domestic demand and exporting should only be considered once logging of native forests by the Forestry Corporation has halted and logging of native trees on private land has become adequately restricted.

**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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Native forests cover 2 million hectares of NSW and have extraordinary economic and social benefits. Forests provide economic benefits for their local communities, preserving water quality, improving air quality and attracting tourism. They also store carbon which promotes a liveable climate for everyone. Everyone receives an economic and social benefit of a liveable climate. I already mentioned 'Country Needs People' as an example of Aboriginal rangers and I'd like to particularly highlight the work of the Githabul rangers in Northern NSW who have successfully managed feral pig populations and restored the Eastern Bristle Bird Habitat.

**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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Logging native forests in NSW contributes 3.6 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> every year. Ending native logging would be equivalent to removing almost a million cars from NSW roads in terms of Carbon Emissions. Native forests that have not been logged are much more resilient to climate change induced catastrophic fires and are essential to NSW heath and survival.