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

Having lived and worked in Taree for 30 years, I witnessed the progressive degradation of the area's forests due to over harvesting, weed intrusion into disturbed areas and increasing fire frequency, both wildfires and controlled burns. Work by Professor Lyndenmayer and his team at the ANU has shown that current forest harvesting methods render the regrowing forest dryer, less biodiverse and markedly more flammable than an undisturbed forest. Eucalypts in native forests live for 300-500 years and many rain forest species longer still. Our experience with current high impact forestry only goes back about 50 years so if already we can see evidence of decline we should surely protect forests rather than subject them to exploitation without being certain that we are not damaging them.

As I mentioned I lived in Taree for 30 years and saw all the major sawmills in the area close. This indicated the forestry operations in the area were not sustainable.

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

Many iconic species such as the koala, greater glider, platypus, powerful owl and eastern quoll depend on intact undisturbed forest ecosystems for their survival. But they are just the well known species. There are tens of thousands of plants and creatures that can only survive in a mature native forest. We are a wealthy nation but we have the worst record for plant and animal extinctions of any developed country. Extensive land clearing, high intensive broadacre agriculture, urban and coastal development have had a huge negative impact on our native fauna and flora. Our public forests are precious refuges that need urgent protection.

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

Currently the bulk of timber required for building purposes is sourced from plantations. Across Australia only between 9% and 12% of timber from native forests ends up as sawlogs. The remaining 88%-91% ends up as woodchips, biofuel or is burned onsite. This form of forest harvesting bares no resemblance to selective logging that took place prior to the 1970's and drastically alters forest biology.

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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**

Plantations would seem to be the best solution to meeting the state's timber needs. The timber is of uniform size and density, techniques for establishing plantations have been successful over a long period and they allow preservation of native forests.

**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 net financial return from logging in native forests is poor. Most of the wood extracted is sold as low value chips or burned.

The potential for future nature tourism is great.

The most important roles for native forests I feel however are for conservation of plants and animals, preservation of our water catchments and carbon sequestration. Human wellbeing in decades and centuries to come may well depend on having such areas as refuges from the stresses and complexity of our world.

**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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Current evidence has shown that undisturbed forests sequester more carbon than those subjected to logging, are more biodiverse and have a greater capacity to adapt to changes in temperature, rainfall and climate instability. The more biodiverse an ecosystem is, the greater its resilience.

As the pressures of population growth and climate change increase, the inherent value of preserved native forests will also increase.