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

With overestimation of harvestable timber and declining yields from native forests it can be concluded that native forest logging is unsustainable.

The context of sustainability must also consider the dependence of native fauna on mature, unlogged forests. In NSW nearly 200 species rely on hollows for dens and nests as well as a food source. Native forest logging cannot be considered sustainable when it has such a negative impact on the preservation of biodiversity and species survival eg our koalas are presently facing extinction due to logging.

Continued logging in native forests significantly impacts on the functioning of healthy ecosystems, connectivity of forests, water quality and susceptibility to fire.

Once a forest is logged the ecosystem is altered to a point where recovery is long and difficult and wildlife corridors are interrupted. At the present rates of logging this activity is not sustainable.

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

In NSW there are 150 threatened species which are directly affected by native forest logging.

Mature native forests are critical to the survival of these species. Connectivity and health of forest ecosystems is vital for the movement of species and genetic diversity. Native forest logging can isolate ecosystems and weaken species survival. Plant and animal extinction rates in NSW/Australia are unacceptably high. Continued logging of native forests puts further pressure on the survival of threatened species and will place even more species on the endangered list.

NSW native forests have significant cultural and spiritual values for our First Nations People.

Connection to forest including cultural practice and knowledge must be recognised and respected.

Native forests are also important for recreation and mental health. Surveys have consistently shown that people want native forests preserved. There is greater wealth and purpose in allowing and encouraging people to visit and connect with our forests than with logging them.

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

In Australia in 2023 native forest logging was only 9% of total log production. Half of the logs taken from native forests were woodchipped and exported. In addition, 87% of hardwood plantation logs were exported as wood chip and only a small percentage were used as saw or veneer logs.

We do not need native forest logging because sawn and treated softwood logs and composite timber products made from softwoods are a viable substitute.

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

91% of Australia's log production is supplied through plantations and so the future of plantations is assured. Plantations are not biodiverse ecosystems. Native forests which have been logged should be allowed to regenerate and not converted to a plantation system.

Private native forestry eg selective harvesting of native hardwood products should only occur with strict conditions to prevent the destruction of biodiverse forests. Threatened species should not be impacted by private native forestry. Land clearing on private land for forestry purposes is not acceptable.

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

Preserving native forests is more economically, environmentally and socially valuable than logging.

Addressing climate change through carbon storage, maintaining biodiversity and water quality, promotion of tourism/employment plus employment through forest management are all achieved when native forest logging is stopped.

The native forest hardwood division presently operates at a significant loss (tens of millions of dollars). NSW taxpayers are paying to destroy our forests and thus the habitats of our native species.

First Nations Ranger programs have proven to be very successful and should be expanded.

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

Climate change threatens our very existence. Our children's future depends on government action to reduce emissions.

In NSW logging of native forests releases around 3.6 million tonnes of carbon per year. Forests act as huge carbon sinks. Preserving mature native forests and allowing previously logged forests to recover is an important step towards meeting emission reduction targets.