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

The current NSW Government has proved to be profoundly sub optimal in its management of our native forests, its general approach to environmental issues and its transparency in regards to intent, content and behaviour in these fields.

It appears to be a glove puppet for late stage crony neo-liberal capitalism.

And we are very far from being Marxists.

Those of us who voted for the Minns team are especially disappointed in Minister Sharpe.

We will be voting Green next time I fear- which is so sad.

The following are points with which we completely agree:

Native forest logging is unsustainable

Calculations by the Forestry Corporation of the amount of harvestable timber are consistently over estimated

The yield from public native forests has declined by 40% since 2010

Protections for mature trees were removed in 2018 and logging was intensified to try and get more wood from native forests

Logging of native forests reduces biomass and carbon storage, and removing mature trees takes away valuable food sources and hollow bearing trees

174 species in NSW rely on hollows for dens and nests, logging reduces the number of hollows that will be created in native forests

Native forest logging increases fire threat and intensity, erosion and water way pollution, and the penetration of weeds and other invasive species

Native forest logging reduces the function and health of waterways, including streams and rivers

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

Healthy and unlogged forests are critical to the whole environment and both First Nations and non-First Nations culture and identity

Forests, particularly healthy mature forests, generate rainfall, cool the landscape and clean the air
150 threatened species in NSW are directly impacted by logging native forests

Mature and unlogged native forests are critical for pollinators and play a key role in pollination across the landscape, both inside and outside of forests

Native forests provide recreation and improved health outcomes to locals and visitors alike and are a source of community pride and connection to place

Native forests in NSW hold significant cultural and spiritual value for First Nations people

First Nations people and communities have ongoing connection to native forests and forest landscapes are an integral part of cultural practice and knowledge

There are 269 nationally listed threatened species in NSW and the landscape scale significance of native forests means that native forest logging compromises many ecosystems and habitats throughout NSW

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

Logging in native forests accounted for only 9% of the total log production in Australia in the year 2023. Native forest logging contributes only 2.4 million of the total 25 million cubic metres for that year

Half of the logs taken from native forests in 2023 were turned into woodchip and exported

Hardwood logs taken from plantations made up 8.5 million cubic metres, and just 8% of these logs were saw and veneer logs. 87% of hardwood plantation logs were exported as wood chips

Hardwood sourced from native forests or plantations are no longer necessary for any of the uses identified in this section

Sawn and treated softwood logs and composite timber products made from softwoods can substitute for all current uses for native forest and plantation hardwoods

The market and demand for native forests is declining rapidly, the recent example of Essential Energy moving away from power poles harvested from native forests is just one example

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

Plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production

A higher proportion of harvested logs from plantations should be prioritised as saw and veneer logs, rather than exporting them as wood chips

Subsidising the logging of public native forests by the Forestry Corporation is non-competitive and distorts the market away from the more profitable softwood plantation industry

High-end and luxury native hardwood products should only be selectively harvested on private land and under strict conditions

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

Native forests that are not logged have real and tangible benefits to the entire ecology and economy of NSW

Native state forests cover an area of 2 million hectares in NSW and impact on a diverse set of living conditions for many towns, from water quality in reservoirs, to greater tourism industry opportunities, and carbon storage and abatement

The native forest hardwood division of the Forestry Corporation operates at a loss that runs into tens of millions of dollars, at the expense of the NSW public. It also additionally receives tens of millions of dollars in regular equity injections

The people of NSW should not be paying millions of dollars to destroy the biodiversity of our own state and critical habitat for threatened species

Public native forests have a much higher economic value when they are allowed to function naturally and without logging

First Nations Ranger Programs have been hugely successful at managing the recovery and health of native forests. Programs like the Githabul Rangers have shown how First Nations knowledge and management can restore the natural and critical function of forests in the landscape

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

Native forest logging in NSW is estimated to release 3.6 million tonnes of carbon every year

Public submission

Ending native forest logging would be the equivalent to removing 840 thousand cars from the roads per year

Logging in a native forest reduces the amount of stored carbon by more than half of the original value

Ending native forest logging will allow previously logged forests to regain lost carbon and make a significant contribution to meeting our emissions targets

Climate change is driving increased risks for forest health and continued logging in native forests is exacerbating that risk

Forests that have not been logged are more resilient to the changing climate and catastrophic fires that are occurring as a consequence

Thank you for your attention,
Lindsay and Robyn.