

GEORGIE HUXTABLE

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

Logging native forest is not a sustainable industry. Australia still has net deforestation which has a massive impact on species extinction. Plantation forestry must replace native forest logging, and other materials, such as composite board and recycled plastic products must replace native timber use in the building industry. We must cease deforestation of our native forests - net deforestation points to an unsustainable industry.

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

Australia has the highest rate of species extinction in the world - largely due to habitat loss. Logging our beautiful native forests is a large part of the problem. . This is not only a shameful national issue, it is a danger to the longer term stability of our natural ecosystems.

Ecosystem collapse is a result of destruction of interconnected ecosystems due to deforestation, urbanisation, salination of the soil, pollution of air and water and so on. Our ecosystems are vital to our existence . Forests process carbon- when healthy and intact - acting as giant carbon sinks , vitally important as the global climate crisis accelerates; forests provide oxygen to our atmosphere; and act as cooling systems and humidifiers- increasingly important in our warming climate.

Forests provide vital soil stabilisation and thereby prevent soil loss through wind storms & erosion. Loss of trees throughout history has led to desertification of vast tracts of previously fertile land in Africa, the Middle East, and Egypt(for example.). Extreme deforestation has resulted in the collapse of entire civilisations as on Easter island.

Soils are improved by the interconnections of trees, and fungi. We are only just beginning to understand the complexity of these interactions. Forests provide food and shelter for insects which are vital for the pollination of many of our food crops. Loss of insects is a world wide issue of concern regarding food security.

The destruction of the habitat, by deforestation, for so many animals, insects, fungi, and diverse plant species is not only disastrous for those species , but it is a death knell for ALL species , including humans.

It is also MORALLY wrong to devastate these environments and destroy the species dependent on them.

Humans not only depend physically on natural healthy interconnected ecosystems, we also benefit culturally and psychologically from having diverse healthy ecosystems and forests. Humans benefit emotionally from contact with forests and trees. The Japanese have a word to express the experience of being in a forest - 'shinrin-yoku' - literally 'forest bathing' - this has become an activity in Australia because of the beneficial spiritual and psychological effects it produces.

Forests nurture humans, often without us even being conscious of this until the trees (and birds , animals and insects which live amongst them) are gone. Then the grief of the loss of the natural world can be profound. There is a growing medical awareness of this very real emotional, impact

and we now, sadly, have a word for ecological grief. It is 'solastalgia' - a word which should never have had to be coined - but which now is becoming a real cause of concern in many Australians, in particular among young people and even children. This is the cultural impact of ecological destruction - of which logging our forests, with all the flow on effects, is a distressingly large part.

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

Timber products must be sourced from genuinely renewable plantations. The building industry and society in general must accept alternative products like plastic and composite building products. Our government must move away from cutting down native timber. Also from exporting native timber and chipping native forests to sell overseas.

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

Plantation timber must be sustainably managed where the use of timber products is essential. Otherwise alternative products using materials which can be recovered from waste must gradually replace timber in all these industries. Plastic waste pollution is a global catastrophe, yet the technology for using plastic waste to make building materials already exists. The government must support research and development in this sort of circular economy industry and reduce the demand for timber supplies.

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

State forests have a responsibility to maintain the forests intact.

It is ironic that trees are thought to have no value until they are cut down and turned into a product .

Money can be made for trees remaining in the ground - tourism and national, recreational opportunities. People travel to see big trees and intact forests, and will increasingly do so as the climate warms, seeking shade and solice.

Improving the health of the society has an economic benefit to the country.

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

Healthy forests are carbon sinks. We desperately need every tree in Australia to remain alive, and to increase rather than decrease our green cover. The forestry industry cause huge release of carbon - trash wood has been placated in devastating fires. Logged a fragmented forests suffer much worse bush fires. Living trees take up carbon, and when they are gone the carbon doesn't get taken down out of the atmosphere.

Forests provide large areas of shade and cool the earth's surface. They help develop humidity and rainfall thereby preventing dessiccation of the soil, reduction of droughts and erosion.

Diverse connected ecosystems, rich with biodiversity, benefit us all. Without them we will perish.

Climate change is accelerating and the global community must recognise this and act with strength and commitment to preserve the remaining natural ecosystems. Australia has a poor record in this regard and must move away from fossil fuels , deforestation and species extinction .

Our government needs to value living trees and forests and move away from the antiquated idea of trees and forests only having value when cut down and sold.

Public submission

Our government must take the responsible decision to end native forest logging at once. The people of Australia will ultimately benefit from this decision, as our forests improve in health and provide better living conditions for us all.

Indeed we have a moral responsibility globally to do everything we can in our country to help reduce the climate crisis - and stopping net deforestation and logging of native forests is one big step in the right direction.