Independent Forestry Panel

Public submission

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

NSW now has large areas of plantation forest, enough for a vibrant and sustainable timber industry. Mature native forest has much higher conservation value and stored carbon content than any plantation forest. This is very valuable. Once a mature native forest is logged it takes centuries to restore itself, much longer than any commercially sustainable forestry cutting cycle. Once logged, a native forest is therefore not replaced. Continued logging of mature native forest means there will come a time when these are not available any more for forestry. This is not sustainable.

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

Mature native forests have has a much higher percentage of old trees than other environments. Most old trees in Australia develop with hollows in which native animals can live and raise their young. This includes highly endagered bird and mammal species. Typically trees need to be 100+ years old to have suitable hollows. The cutting cycles of plantation forests are too frequent for a sustainable number of hollows to develop. Remaining unlogged native forests outside national parks contribute significantly to ensuring the survival of endangered species.

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

Only a small proportion of logging from native forests is used for housing, construction, mining, transport or retail. Plantation forests provide most current forestry production for these purposes. As we currently export a lot of this there should be more than adequate supply for NSW needs from existing plantation. forests.

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

Given the growth in demand for wood products and the need for carbon offsets it is expected there will be continued growth in softwood and hardwood plantations, including privately owned plantations, for future timber supply. These are not the same as long standing mature native forests, which should no longer be logged for timber supply needs..

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

Existing mature native forests provide the greatest contribution of any forest environment to carbon storage and diversity benefits. If these are in State Forests, the best strategy is to preserve them as they are, not log them, There are significant social and potential econonomic benefits from tourism in having conservation-consistent accessibility to such forests. Mature forests such

as these also less likely to be lost in bushfires, a major consideration in a climate changed warmer world. Aboriginal management models may also have a place.

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

Existing mature native forests provide the greatest contribution of any forest environment to carbon and diversity benefits. Logging such forests reduces carbon storage and diversity. Logging of mature native forests should cease immediately.

I believe it likely there are significant opportunities to manage plantation forests more optimally for greenhouse gas emission impacts, biodiversity markets, and current and future climate change risks. This last mtem includes both bushfire risk and the progressive changes in the range available to tree species due to higher temperatures.