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

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Given the extinction crisis, continued logging of native forest is not sustainable. 174 species rely on hollows, and logging in native forest prevents these from being formed. Although the NSW government has promised to create a great koala national Park, the reality is that only 5% of this area has been protected, and logging of the other areas continues unabated. It is impossible to reach the stated goal of doubling koala populations while the status quo is upheld. Not only koalas but greater gliders are now critically endangered. Much of this native forest logging is going to low grade timber use, woodchip and pulp. Maintaining these practices for the sake of dwindling jobs on the sector, while the industry itself runs at a loss, points to the need for change. Protection for mature trees was removed in 2018 and as a result logging has intensified. Logging also removes a vital carbon sink, which is required as we move towards a carbon neutral future.

There is much evidence to suggest that thinning forest canopy leads to increased and more intense bushfire risk. Logging also leads to erosion and pollution of waterways. Plantation timber needs to be prioritised and native forest logging needs to be ended immediately.

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

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Of the 269 nationally listed threatened species, 150 are directly impacted by logging native forests. The koala, a national icon, is among these. Currently it is forecast that they will be extinct in the wild by 2050, so every effort needs to be made to turn around this situation, including by stopping logging of native forests. The extinction crisis has become even more serious since the devastating fires in NSW in 2019. Habitat for the greater glider was decimated and they are now critically endangered. Native forest logging removes trees which will form hollows for these animals.

Mature and healthy forests form an essential part of Aboriginal cultural identity. First nations people have ancient and ongoing spiritual connection to mature forests, which is broken through logging.

Forests also provide recreational value to indigenous and non-indigenous people.

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

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While timber is an important sustainable resource, it should not be extracted from native forests. In 2023, logs from native forests only accounted for 9% of the total logs harvested in Australia. Of these, half of the logs were turned into woodchip and exported. Similarly, 87 percent of hardwood plantation logs were exported for woodchip. As such, they barely contribute to NSW housing, construction, mining, transport and retail needs. Alternatives are available for these uses, such as sawn and treated softwood logs and composite timbers from softwoods. Essential

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energy has recently moved away from using poles sourced from native forests. The demand for timber from native forests is declining rapidly.

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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**

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The majority of logs (91 percent) are already sourced from plantations, however 87 percent of hardwood plantation logs were exported as woodchip in 2023. This is wasteful and these logs should be prioritised for saw and veneer logs instead.

The logging of native forests by Forestry Corporation is subsidised and runs at a loss. This creates distortion of the market, leading to a business as usual mindset to logging of native forests, rather than focusing on the more profitable softwood plantation industry. There is a role for selective harvesting of high value native hardwood on private land under strict conditions.

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#### **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 role of State Forests needs to be changed from one based on flawed and failing commercial interests to one of conservation and nurturing of mature forests which provide habitat as well as social outcomes for members of society. I am a member of the mountain bike club which operates within Kiwarrak State Forest. The forest is not only home to many koalas and other wildlife, but contains some of the best mountain bike tracks in the state. The commercial opportunity that could be gained by supporting and promoting the mountain biking far outweighs the meagre profits (or more likely loss) derived from its logging, which has not only destroyed habitat, but has heavily damaged the appeal of the mountain bike tracks. Drawing on 60000 years of knowledge of Australian forests by promoting Aboriginal forest management is strongly recommended. First nations ranger programs have provided a proven model of success.

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#### **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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One of the most effective ways of mitigating climate change is to stop logging native forest and to nurture and protect mature forests. The continuation of logging of these forests is in direct contrast with Australia's commitment to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. An estimated 3.6 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> is released by logging native forests in NSW each year. By contrast, mature and complex forests create carbon sinks, increase moisture retention thereby reducing bushfire risk, and provide habitat for our iconic wildlife. When native forest logging was reduced in Tasmania, that state achieved major carbon credits. This is a direction that should be followed by NSW.