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

The Regional Forest agreement (RFA) back in 1998, then implemented in 2000, made all the hard decisions re State Forest estate and transfer of crown lands to National Park. This involved setting up the Comprehensive and Representative Reserve System (CARR). This was a very difficult and at times, emotive process done over many months between the Green elements re conservation and the timber management /industry which basically (andreluctantly) agreed on the 50/50 deal ,leading to 50% of SF going to NP, much of which was good production forest types like Blackbutt on the North Coast as well as Flooded Gum forests. This was the hard linebetween conserving significant areas and types of ecosystems, whilst keeping a viable timber industry and local regional communities economic base. So, there is no room to now revisit and request large areas/ volumes of native hardwood timber to be taken out of this very delicate 2000 balance (remember forestry is a very much a long term business/management of crown lands) The deal was tight then and is even tighter now! Some 25years later. At the time all parties agreed to 'abide by the referees decision' but now the conservation groups simply want more NP , using Koalas as the iconic emotive issue, and consequently kill off the Native Hardwood Industry (as was the case in VIC and WA). The RFA decision needs to be sustained with no erosion of area and resource and not be an emotive political football, as the consequence of it's closure will have major repercussions to regional timber communitis, like mine, , here [REDACTED] pop 1100people. The Industry has learn to adapt to smaller logs etc with imporved technology and techniques, with considerable 'value adding' to their unique instrinsic timber species values ,the Industry is to be applauded and this was a direct consequence of the RFA investment packages ,both at State and Federal levels. ,the [REDACTED] mills are a prime example of this ,see the recent Dorney family video delivered to NSW Parliament on 18th Sept 2024. A major concern is that there seems to be no real development or compensatory financial package in the current proposal, yet 2000 RFA process was financial backed by both State and Federal Governments. Do we kick'em out with no conscience or adjustment packages? ,surely the Green elements need to have an understading of the consequences for their sweeping calls. Private Forestry is regulated to some extent re practice but is a 'dog eat dog' game between sawmillers trying to get access to private timber resource and is it a short term availability or will it remain in production into the futre? Govt needs to offer incentatives for landowners to commit long term to native timber production ,previous schemes were started in the last 40 years, but governments tends to 'chicken out' (funding wise) due to the long term commitment needed, plus land ownership changes in time? Therefore the Crown Land Estate must be there for the long term management of these unique timber species ,which we have been doing successfully for over 108years, under the old Forestry Commission of NSW since 1916 ,and currently NSW Forest Corp.

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

Crown land forests have been managed for conservation values since the Forestry Act of 1916, which specifically set up Flora Reserves in the early days to preserve significant area/forest types,

(which then virtually all became part of the NP estate, after the RFA transfers in 2000). Crown forests provide significant habitat for both native flora and fauna, including threatened species. The current regulations are there to ensure viable population survive any logging operation. I was in the profession for over 43 years and did not see the killing of native animals in the logging process, despite the over emotive Green claims re koalas. 'Proof is in the pudding' here in [REDACTED] where we have been logging this area since 1860s, with the SFs having been logged at least x4 times, yet we get koalas in the surveys and highway sightings! Note Koalas are not stupid!, they move out of an active logging operation to adjacent forest, as they dislike the noise and general disturbance- but are keen to recolonise the logged area within months due to the availability of high nutrient feed in regrown leaf from seedings and coppice shoots (shoots from stumps etc.) The sighting of koalas in logging areas and the impact of logging on koalas has been the subject of excellent scientific independent research that found that logging in SF and koalas can coexist (See Brad Law paper) despite the ridicule from the green's camp. Crown Land forests have been effectively managed for the full range of environmental and cultural values, particularly since the mid 1980s with introduction of better management regulations in response to changes in social values and expectations. There has not been any blanket mis-management of the crown forests, rather just a set of tougher regulations, which are then utilised by a bunch of zealots that are hell bent on destroying the Native Forest Management/Industry, as part of their beliefs/mantra, (which is then exploited through our political system depending on the balance of power etc or necessary deals to keep/gain political dominance, unfortunately this is norm). Govt agencies have embraced the Aboriginal cultural values on the crown estate and embraced the local Aboriginal community itself to be inclusive in forest management decisions, this is to be applauded and has been well received by the local Aboriginal communities (through employment of Aboriginal Liaison Officers etc.) Native Hardwood Forests are biologically diverse with a wide range of species that can be logged, given that less than 1% of forest is logged in any one year, again the 'proof is in the pudding' given the flora and fauna diversity in our local [REDACTED] State Forest after having been harvested for over 160 years!

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

NSW Native hardwoods are unique in their intrinsic properties that have made them such a valuable social and economic resource to date. This must remain, as these values cannot be substituted by imports from South East Asian/ Pacific timbers - (compounded by justifying ethically less regulated logging in those countries, just to prop up our demand for timber products, given we have an established quality run unique Native Hardwood Forest Industry here in NSW. Surely, someone has to be held accountable for the consequences (even globally) of calling for the abolition of the NSW Native Forest Industry. The demand for native timber is high and its use in niche markets is increasing. The Industry need security of supply into the future to full utilise the market through investment in technology/ equipment and marketing. Some end use of these unique hardwood species cannot be substituted, nor sourced from plantations, due to their slow growth .e.g. hardwood poles underpin the NSW electricity grid, with their significant size/length, strength and durability. These magnificent products are made naturally from simply soil, rain and sunshine!, totally renewable, yet by doing away with the Native Timber Industry the power industry will be driven to concrete or steel substitutes, which are far less environmentally acceptable, as well as limited in their versatility whilst being more costly.

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

Plantations are an important component in supply of hardwood timber. Many were established back in the 1980s and 1990s but have been exploited prematurely due to pressure to supply timber and political decisions to abandon them re future funding. This happened in the early 2000s after considerable time (and funds) were used to establish private hardwood plantations on a shared arrangement between the landowners and relevant government agencies. This type of scheme needs to be established but remember, forestry is a long term investment ,minimum of 40years, using the fastest growing species like Blackbutt/Flooded Gum, of the best genetic stock, on the best quality sites re soil fertility and climate. Obviously, this is the best agricultural land in NSW hence attracts a premium price. So establishing hardwood plantations on good agricultural land is very expensive and would need to have a lead in time on a mimum of 25years before some timber yields. The Green lobby wants all Native Forest logging on Crown lands to cease immediately and timber to be sourced from hardwood plantations established on non Crown Lands! This is near impossible, as we need to have started 40years ago ,(which we did but later prematurely plundered). This timber resource needs to be ready now and that is certainly not the current situation. Governments would need to commit to a long term plantation establishment program, with a mighty budget to establish trees on good quality non crown lands. I believe, this would bring about outcry from rural producers as good grazing land is taken out of cattle production. So.. plantations have a real role in the future but they are not available now, on any grand scale (possibly needing 20,000has plus) to substitute for closing down the Native Hardwood Industry in the next 5 years. Softwood plantations are already over committed to their own specific wood industry (especially since the 2019 fires) ..and pine timber is not a suitable substitute for many hardwood species ,as explained earlier- eg strength , durability etc. There are many site on existing State Forest that could enable plantation establishment ,identified in early Management Plans and subsequent surveys.

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

The current model of a Government Corporate entity like NSW Forest Corp is flawed. Their primary focus is on timber supply and making a fair financial return on sale of timber from Native Harwood forests, for the people of NSW. This focus comes at the expense of other significant factors like basic land management of the Crown Land estate e.g. fire management, feral animal control, recreational facilities and maintenance of the vast network of roads and fire trails. The current condition of this infrastructure and supply of those services across the NSW State Forest estate is appalling as they chase the timber supply /revenue and really only maintain the immediate roads etc. to gain access for logging operations. There is a need to return to basic Government Agency management and it will 'cost what it will cost!'The Greens have always used the argument that if the State forest entity loses \$s, then why log? The collection of royalties traditionally only represent about 10% of the total value of these timber products in the market place the call to 'Close them down!' BUT you need to look at the big picture of all the elements, like employment in regional NSW, taxes paid, economic viability of small rural businesses like family sawmills. Of course there is a need to be efficient, but the standards of maintaining the entire estate should be to an agreed standard , a need to maintain the people's forest for all their values, not just timber production! Please remember that supply of timber from Crown Lands underpins the actual Timber industry, so by closing down the Forest Estate will kill the industry and with that major impact on the socio ,economic well- being of many small rural NSW towns. Like ██████████ where it has a population of 1100 people, being a timber town on a lake /river

system for 160 years. The timber industry employed over 100 primary jobs, let alone the flow on jobs. To cease that employment would dramatically impact the towns employment base, supply of basic services like health, education as well a general commerce. THIS is the REAL HUMAN CONSEQUENCE of doing away with the NATIVE TIMBER INDUSTRY -who will be accountable? Future Forest Management should return to a model similar to that used in WA in the mid 1990s where an overarching government department (Dept. of Land and Water Conservation?) managed the entire Crown Land estate ,including dedicated State Forests and National Parks ,where those entities remained looking after the specific roles ,wildlife conservation or Timber harvesting etc., but the basic land management services are applied over the whole estate like road maintenance, supply of recreation activities /facilities, cultural values/ engagement, fire management and protection. This model has a lot of merit going for it with significant cost savings by not duplicating services like the road maintenance team, the fire fighting organisation. I recommend this to you!

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

Native Hardwood forest captures significant amounts of carbon ,much tied up in the timber product itself. There is need to be diligent management of emissions associated with machinery etc. Also in fire management where by adopting 'Cultural Burning' techniques could reduce the volume of emissions from blanket hazard reduction burning. Plus more effective fuel load reduction should lead to less wildfires and consequently less carbon emissions. Also the education of landowners and the establishment of plantations on private lands again having major improvements in carbon capture. It has been proven that regeneration of the native forest after logging ,mostly naturally, due the mechanisms like epicormic shoots and lignotuber activation, has a greater ability to capture carbon than established old grown forests. It also has benefits re flora biodiversity and feed source for native fauna. A natural native hardwood forest is a much better diverse ecosystem than a mono culture planting up as a plantation on purchased agricultural land! The retention and active management of the NSW Crown Land Estate must have positive effects on climate change with regulated catchment runoff from regrown forest floors and their associated biodiversity.