

LOLA DAVIDSON

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

A commercial enterprise that depends on government subsidies is clearly not commercially viable. Such subsidies can then only be justified on broader social grounds, such as those addressed below. I do not believe that the logging of native forest meets these criteria.

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

The environmental benefits of preserving native forests are self-evident. Without the native forests, all the fauna and flora which depend on them will die and the species proceed to become extinct. Forests are recognized as an important part of our struggles to combat climate change. Old growth forests, as well as soaking up carbon, are more resistant to the bushfires which are becoming an increasing problem everywhere, but especially here. Forests are culturally important not only to the Aboriginal people but the people generally, and many people depend on them for recreation and the mental and physical benefits that come from visiting them.

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

Clearly the demand for timber products is important and, indeed, may well increase as we attempt to move to more sustainable environmental practices. More attention will need to be paid to the reuse of timber but obviously most will have to come from managed plantations. There is no reason to continue logging native forest when timber can be grown in plantations on already cleared land. Or is the logging of native forest intended to destroy all native forest so that it can be turned into plantations? What else is the rationale?

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

Plantations should be managed so as to reduce the fire risk they so obviously pose due to vast monocultures of highly flammable trees such as firs and eucalypts. Timber plantations are a necessity, as are other forms of farming, but there is no reason why they should not be subject to the same requirements of viability as other commercial enterprises.

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

I would expect that State Forests would be managed for the social good rather than commercial profit. The emphasis should be management to promote environmental and social outcomes rather than economic ones, since the latter could only be in conflict with the former.

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

Involvement of native forests in carbon and biodiversity markets could be potentially be of advantage to both supporting the forests and the markets. The role of native forests in limiting the damage caused by climate change needs serious study, particularly in relation to flood and bushfire mitigation and the general health of our water systems.