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

1. Sustainability has three dimensions - environmental, economic and social. Current forestry operations in NSW fail on all dimensions.
 - a. Environmental
 - i. The Forestry Corporation of NSW (FC) has been found on numerous occasions to be not meeting their environmental protection obligations, including in regard to protecting known habitat for koalas and Greater Gliders. On some of these occasions, fines have been issued.
 - ii. The FC continued harvesting timber in the wake of the Black Summer fires, when vast areas of forests across the State had been destroyed and habitat for all species, including threatened species, was scarce. This demonstrates a disregard for the environment and an absence of commitment to the sustainability of the resource itself.
 - b. Economic
 - i. The FC 2023 Annual Report showed earnings of only \$3 million on revenue of \$383 million (0.78%), and a return on equity of 0.2%. However, earnings of \$19 million in the softwood plantation division were almost completely offset by a loss of \$2 million from native forest logging and loss of \$13 million from land management. According to the report, the result was driven by decreasing demand for softwood timber products, and increased costs of logging hardwood from native forests due to access issues as well as the increased costs of environmental compliance. The report points out that only 1% of native forest is harvested each year. When one considers the environmental cost (which FC does not), is it worth it?
 - ii. There seems to be no net value at all in logging native forests. The \$13.5 million dividend paid to NSW Treasury appears to have been paid out of FC's \$128 million in reserves.
 - c. Social
 - i. The ongoing loss of biodiversity and the menace caused by climate change cause immeasurable heartache to communities across NSW, Australia and the globe. That community members and environmental associations sit down, in their own time, to write submissions to an Independent Forest Industry Panel to plead the case to cease native forest logging, is indicative of the negative social impact of an activity that exacerbates environmental threats for no effective return.
 - ii. Forestry workers have the potential to both deliver and receive positive social and economic benefits through a shift in their work away from timber harvesting and towards positive forest management activities such as conservation and remediation.

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

1. On 22nd July 2024, Environment Minister Penny Sharpe declared that "We cannot ignore the truth: biodiversity in NSW is in crisis. Our goal must be to leave nature better off than we have found it."
2. However, native forest logging continues. We understand that 150 threatened species in NSW are directly impacted by logging native forests. We read that logging makes bushfires worse

for decades after the logging trucks have left. We know that healthy forests purify our water, they capture carbon and preserve biodiversity. We also know that native forests are culturally and spiritually significant for First Nations people.

3. The environmental and cultural values of forests far outweigh any other considerations. Our resources must be directed to the total protection of these inestimably valuable national assets.

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

1. There is strong demand for timber products for housing, construction, etc. To meet this demand the focus should be on plantation timber. Plantation timber is a renewable resource that captures and retains carbon while contributing to the economy.

2. A significant proportion of timber harvested from native forests is sold and exported as woodchip. The pressure to fulfil contracts for supply of woodchip is a key driver of FC logging operations and leads to decisions that come at the expense of the environment.

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

1. Plantations should be the primary investment tool for to meet future demand for durable wood products. Development of a sustainable plantation timber industry should be the remit of the FC in terms of timber supply.

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

1. Indigenous forest management models should be implemented in native forests when native forest logging has ceased (which should be immediately).

2. In addition to plantation management, the FC's future remit should be to manage native forests without logging, with timber workers to be retrained as forest managers, implementing new acquired skills such as cool burns to reduce fire risk (to protect native habitat and communities) and assist the recovery of threatened species, remediation and conservation work, species monitoring, and continuing to facilitate access for the enjoyment of the wider community.