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

As a nature lover and keen follower of the Wilderness Society, Greenpeace and the Australian Conservation Foundation I will quote from their websites in my submission because I know they do excellent research themselves or access high quality research from trusted sources. Quoting from the website of The Wilderness Society, "Australia is a global deforestation front, alongside Borneo, the Amazon and the Congo, and has the highest rate of mammal extinctions in the world. For our climate, wildlife and future, Australia must go deforestation-free."

Also according to their website, "the NSW government approves around 14,000 hectares of public native forest logging in NSW per year, in some of the most biodiverse and evolutionarily distinct ecosystems in the continent. This is like losing an area comparable to the Royal National Park a year. Forestry Corp of NSW undertakes the logging, with much of what is logged being turned into low-value products such as woodchips for export, pallets and firewood."

The Wilderness Society's website then states, "Native forest logging is not only driving species extinction, it is a loss-making industry that costs taxpayers millions of dollars a year." The Society proposes a transition from native forest logging to sustainable plantations.

I hope you are taking into account research from the Wilderness Society and other such environmental advocates, and of the research which they incorporate into their advocacy when you consider the future of forestry operations in NSW. The protection of our native forests, with their amazing biodiversity, must be your "main game" for the sake of the planet, let alone future generations.

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

According to the Australian Conservation Foundation, "First Nations people have shaped and managed land and sea country for millennia. Connection to country is a crucial element of Australian Indigenous cultures." The foundation also states, "The Australian Conservation Foundation acknowledges that First Nations Peoples of Australia hold unique knowledge and rights inherited from their ancestors and Country and have cared for this country since time immemorial We respect their leadership in caring for Country and support their rights to continue to do so. We support their authority to speak for Country, right to self-determination and recognise that rightful recognition of and genuine reconciliation with First Nations Peoples is fundamental to protecting nature in Australia.'

We should recognise we cannot manage our forests without First Nations partnership.

According to the Wilderness Society, "The NSW government's 2022 NSW Vegetation Clearing Report shows that 45,000 hectares have been added to the state's mounting tally of habitat destruction. This is the equivalent of 160 Sydney CBDs.

"In NSW, nearly 1000 plant and animal species are threatened. Nature cannot afford more delay. While the NSW government has promised reform of the state's weak biodiversity and land clearing laws, progress isn't happening fast enough. Each year without stronger protections for

NSW's native forests and bushland means more and more vital habitat is destroyed or fragmented."

Victoria Jack, Campaigns Manager for the Wilderness Society NSW, said, 'The longer we wait for these urgently needed reforms, the more habitat is destroyed and the more species are pushed to the brink of extinction.

'It takes just moments to destroy vital threatened species habitat, and years to even begin to restore it. Much of what is lost can never be replaced. The NSW government's commitment to overhaul the weak laws allowing this to happen is welcome and much needed, but the change isn't happening as quickly as nature needs. The free reign of unchecked land clearing must be brought to an end as quickly as possible.' I totally agree and hope you do too!!!

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

Habitat destruction will occur whether timber, concrete, bricks or metal are used in construction of housing, factories or commercial buildings. However, recycling and upcycling MUST be used wherever possible.

Obviously it is much faster and cheaper to demolish a building and take the resultant waste to landfill. However, more and more ways are being found to use demolition waste, such as crushed material in road base. Timber recycling needs to be prioritised where possible as too often the timber flooring in older houses is taken to landfill rather than reused in home building or renovations.

If old timber is no longer structurally strong it can be recycled into MDF or similar.

Perhaps legislation needs to be introduced to have building inspectors/ certifiers inspect properties for sale and ascertain their "livability". If buildings are deemed "habitable" according to a list of parameters (such as ability to improve insulation if necessary, age and functionality of the kitchen), a fee could then be charged to the buyer should they choose to demolish it. This fee would be determined by the cost of recycling as much of the building's timber, metal, bricks etc as possible. This would help reduce constant thoughtless demolition of decent standalone houses by a new standalone house just to have a modern house.

Both hardwood and softwood can be grown in plantations. There may well be a lag as our hardwood trees reach maturity in plantations and hardwood timber be harder to acquire when native forest logging is stopped. However timber from plantations should eventually become cheaper as more plantations are planted and existing plantation trees become increasingly available.

According to the article "From foraging to cropping: the transition to plantation forestry, and implications for wood supply and demand", by R.A. Sedjo, Director of the Forest, Economics and Policy Program, Washington, DC, United States, "Over the past 50 years forestry has experienced a notable transition from being a foraging operation to becoming what is increasingly a cropping operation. Although there are no really reliable estimates, a rough conjecture is that almost one-third of the world's timber is harvested from planted forests." (Unasylva Forestry Publication No. 204) Why would NSW Forestry not expand on their investment in this established, reliable and sustainable approach to providing our future timber needs?

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

According to the article "Mixed-species versus monocultures in plantation forestry: Development, benefits, ecosystem services and perspectives for the future", by Corsa Lok Ching Liu, Oleksandra Kuchma, Konstantin V. Krutovsky in Global Ecology and Conservation Volume 15, July 2018, e00419, "There is a global trend of increasing forest plantations to relieve the pressure of

deforestation and degradation of natural forests, and to meet the demands for timber products and forest services. The majority of world plantation forests are monocultures with certain dominant tree species, which are favoured for timber production due to the uniformity of trees and easy management However, mixed-species plantations are growing and becoming more popular, since they have been found to have more benefits in biodiversity, economy, forest health and occasionally in productivity compared with monospecific plantations."

This paper goes on to say, "It is necessary to select and combine tree or crop species in mixtures with complementary traits that maximise positive and minimise negative interactions using advanced molecular technologies. With careful design and appropriate management, mixed-species plantations with three or four species can be more productive and have more advantages over disadvantages. As a result, mixed-species plantations and agroforestry should be broadly promoted and adopted as they can produce more economic and ecological gains, and contribute to food security.

"Although, the issue of negative or positive effects of mixed-species forest tree stands on tree growth and ecosystem functions is still controversial, we believe that mixed-species forest tree stands are beneficial for both trees and ecosystems in many regions under the right conditions and appropriate management, and that new genomic tools should help us more efficiently analyse functional interactions between different species."

Research such as this is no doubt being read and considered by the NSW Forestry Corporation. I wholeheartedly hope you will incorporate thorough research into your policies and we will soon have many more well-functioning hardwood and softwood plantations being planted and harvested in NSW. Whether they are operated by the Forestry Corporation or by private enterprise is not the main issue. The focus is that the work is done to a high standard and the health of our environment is FRONT and CENTRE!!

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

Environmental issues have been covered in my response to question four.

Economic issues are too complex for me to research and I will leave it to others to research the economic implications of State Forests no longer logging native forests but harvesting exclusively plantation timber.

But briefly I will reiterate my comments in question four, quoting again from the article "Mixed-species versus monocultures in plantation forestry: Development, benefits, ecosystem services and perspectives for the future", by Corsa Lok Ching Liu, Oleksandra Kuchma, Konstantin V. Krutovsky in *Global Ecology and Conservation* Volume 15, July 2018, e00419, "..... mixed-species plantations are growing and becoming more popular, since they have been found to have more benefits in biodiversity, ECONOMY, forest health and occasionally in productivity compared with monospecific plantations."

With regards to Aboriginal forest management models, The Sustainable Forestry website cites the Benefits of Cultural Burns as

- "Protection of the tree canopy to provide shade, fruit and seeds, encouraging wildlife to return quickly.

- Protection against wild bushfires that threaten fauna and wildlife.

- Cool burns release far less carbon than canopy fires, enabling local land managers to sell carbon credits for the emissions avoided.

- Provision of a place of safety at the top of trees for insects and other small animals seeking refuge from fire

- Preservation of the tree cycle. With its canopy intact the tree does not miss its cyclic renewal.

Trigger for germination. The smoke from a cool burn goes through the canopy and triggers off a reaction for seeds to germinate. "

No doubt you are well aware of Aboriginal forest management practices and their benefits, and I advocate that they be incorporated into NSW Forests' fire management practices as much and as soon as possible to stop horrendous fire seasons such as the 2019-2020 Black Summer.

As for the social outcomes of healthy forests and, by implication, healthy biodiversity, you only need to look at the NSW government's own Environment and Heritage department's website to know your vital role in providing healthy forests and natural habitats in NSW for our benefit.

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

I believe NSW State Forests has a role to play in government carbon offset schemes where an organisation is producing polluting carbon or other emissions. There has been a great deal written about the misuse and abuse of carbon offsetting by corporations who buy or sell the offsets. On the NSW State Forests' website I read you are already participants in carbon crediting. Increasing your role in this scheme would give greater credibility to the carbon offset scheme and thus increase NSW citizens confidence that we are achieving genuine carbon offsets while we work towards a low emission economy.

However, I have also read many articles by environmental organisations such as Greenpeace, Australian Conservation and Wilderness Society about substituting an area of supposedly similar environmental value to be protected for an area which is being cleared. When an area of forest is cleared and another area is chosen to be protected this is not a sound practice. Habitat loss is always permanently destructive. Protecting another similar region does not bring back to life the creatures who die due to destruction of their homes. Many animals cannot just migrate to nearby forests due to the territorial nature of their species. This practice has been shown to be ineffective at preserving species.

It is fictional to suppose that plantation forests or even other native forests can be used to offset biodiversity loss in other parts of the state.

As for climate change risks, Greenpeace's website reminds us that forests draw down carbon from the atmosphere and are therefore mitigators of climate change. Their website also states, "It must be stressed that many types of forests are unable to recover at all following destruction by bulldozers and replacement with agricultural or other land usesthe cumulative impacts on wildlife and the land are immense. Restoring any forest to a pre-bulldozed state is also very difficult and can take many decades, sometimes hundreds of years."

Bulldozing of forests and deforestation of any kind are among the biggest threats to existing forests because they are a huge cause of climate change. Native old growth forests in particular must not be logged because, the older the tree, the more carbon it has sequestered.

In other words, as much as NSW Forestry Corporation harvests our timber it needs to be replacing it with new forests. This is the way forward for sustainable forestry practices.