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

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The logging of native forests is not sustainable and there needs to be a moratorium on native forest logging as soon as possible. Many of our native animals require old growth trees for habitat as it takes longer than 20-30 years for hollows to form among the other services they provide. Current levels of logging cannot be sustained and cause removal of protections for key habitat. It is clearly shown in research that repeated logging of native forests intensifies and worsens bush fires at time when the fire season is growing longer and bush fires are becoming increasingly intense. In addition, loss of habitat through the bush fires of 2019/20 made the loss of any additional habitat much more urgent and serious. Continuing native forest logging will cause the extinction of species and ultimately lead to a degradation in livelihood for every Australian. The destruction, degradation and mismanagement of our forests ultimately impacts everybody in both rural and urban areas. Water quality is diminished, bush fires become more frequent and more intense, droughts increase in length and intensity as the water cycle is damaged, pests and diseases for agricultural crops become more frequent as the animals that would predate them disappear and temperature becomes more variable as the insulating capacity of forests is diminished to name a few of the impacts for Australians. The destruction of biodiversity causes knock-on impacts that reach beyond the scope of our knowledge and ability to foresee with any current research. To learn about this in detail, refer to the book, *Wildlife in the Balance: Why Animals are Humanity's Best Hope*.

Our existing forestry operations on plantations also need to be changed to prioritize sustainability so that future generations can continue to have timber for building, firewood and all their needs whilst maintaining the quality of plantations as ecosystems that support life and biodiversity. This would involve plantations being required to regularly run soil testing diagnostics to ensure that soil degradation is not occurring and soil biology continues to be rich. It would also involve biodiversity surveys in plantations and include the ban of Glyphosate, herbicides and other agro-chemicals that are proven to be harmful to wildlife.

It's also no secret that the quality of timber has decreased in Australia and continues to decrease. Australia no longer produces much quality hardwood timber because of the unsustainable forestry practices. This is the reason that many people now opt to refurbish older timber and reuse it. We need to create plantations that can continue to support future generations.

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

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Our old growth forests are irreplaceable. They are rare biodiversity hubs that remain as refuges for wildlife and flora that can be expanded with bush regeneration to improve the quality of our habitats across the country. As a bush regenerator, I observe the impact that intact habitats have on the bush regeneration work that I do. Every bush regenerator knows that the proximity of healthy forest fragments and intact biodiversity are the greatest indicator for a speedy regeneration of forest from degraded lands. The continuing degradation of our existing forest

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fragments will cost Australians billions of dollars in repair into the future where damage is not irreparable.

In addition, previously logged native forests that are regenerating including national and state forests must be supported to continue improving biodiversity and habitat. As outlined previously, the importance of these forests to all Australians is massive. We will see many species such as the koala go extinct if we continue to practice existing policies. These forests are also critical spaces for the cultural well being of our community beyond the essential ecosystem services they provide that I outlined above. They are spaces of refuge, recreation, and respite for the general community.

For our traditional owners, there are many sacred spaces within our forest that cannot be damaged and require care. This can be an opportunity to return management of our traditional owners who successful cared for them for thousands of years. They are the ones that best know how to improve the quality of life in our forests for all. It would also allow traditional custodians to reconnect to their cultural practices on their lands which were never ceded and were illegally stolen by the Australian government at the time of colonization.

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

Demand for timber will match supply if prices realistically reflect the true cost of harvest. If timber becomes more expensive as a result of improved environmental protection and legislation people will think more carefully about the impact of their activities on their own livelihood and for future generations. We can also create new standards for conveying the value of the timber that people are using. This is already happening with the decrease in the quality of timber in Australia with the increase in demand for used timber and a growing market for recycled timber.

I think we can absolutely create a sustainable and regenerative forest management plan for the whole country that will continue to provide for future generations. Stealing resources from future generations should not be a choice. We should create a timber market that matches our needs with the real cost of the production of timber. Shifting to plantation timber reduces pressure on native forests, supporting sustainable industry practices. There is no longer any need to log public native forests to build houses.

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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**

Hardwood and softwood plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production. Investment in hardwood plantation on already cleared land would supply timber products into the future. In my region, there is actually higher demand for hardwood timbers for housing as people build smaller houses that are better quality and last longer. People prefer native hardwood timbers where available. Shifting to higher-value plantations can better meet timber needs. Ending public forest subsidies would boost sustainable timber production on private lands.

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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**

Healthy native forests provide essential water resources that we all rely upon along with all the essential ecosystem services that I already outlined in the first paragraph. Protecting and restoring State Forests will increase the economic value through tourism, carbon storage, job creation and recreational opportunities. It will also ensure a livable future for generations to come and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The Forestry Corporation is currently financially unsustainable, relying on government support and yielding less timber compared to managed plantations.

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Diverse forest management, particularly Aboriginal models, can enhance the cultural and social value of forests. This is opportunity to give land back to traditional owners for management, including State Forests.

**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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Logging in native forests releases large amounts of carbon, contributing to climate change and increases the impacts of climate change on our country. Stopping native forest logging allows forests to recover, helping them store more carbon and support climate goals. Correct and cultural management of native forests and sustainable harvesting of plantations will contribute to the sequestration of carbon and reduction of climate change. By stopping native forest logging, forests can play a large role in mitigating climate risks and supporting opportunities in carbon markets.