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

Australian forests have been sustainably managed for many thousands of years. Forests provide many benefits to the Australian public and need to continue to be managed rather than be 'preserved' as National Parks. The most appropriate way to manage NSW State Forests is in conjunction with Traditional owners, combining traditional and modern-day techniques. Australia is fortunate to have a wide variety of fast-growing Eucalypts which provide a range of beautiful and durable timbers. Operations would be even more sustainable if cultural aspects such as full tree utilization were incorporated into the timber industry.

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

Cultural values are about the whole forest and about people being part of that forest system. Aboriginal cultural heritage is present throughout all forests, evidence of long-term sustainable management. Our threatened species are mainly affected by changed fire regimes due to the lack of Traditional burning practices by Aboriginal communities. Now we have fires that are too hot, or forests that are long unburnt, unhealthy and in decline.

Our forests need more frequent low intensity cool fires, with traditional open grassy understories returned. Where there is little forest fuel there will be no damaging wildfires. People and animals will be much safer, as fire cannot be carried by forest canopies when the understory is returned to its traditional state.

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

Australian forests could supply significant volumes of forest materials (hard rock and gravel) and timber for NSW transport and construction industries, if managed correctly. If our nation wants to be sustainable we should be utilising our own resources rather than importing these products from overseas.

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

All forests and plantations require ongoing sustainable management to remain healthy, to sustain ecosystems and to provide sustainable timber resources.

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

Aboriginal communities worked throughout forests in the timber industry for many years until the increased mechanization of equipment. Aboriginal people were tree fallers, used to select the trees to be retained and those to be kept and were very involved in forest management right up

to the 1960's and early 70's. We need to make this happen again and return Traditional Owners to the bush,

through working on country ranger programs, restoring traditional understories with fire, assisting to sustainably manage our land and participating in a range of tourism opportunities.

These models require co design and to be equally Aboriginal led.

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

The climate change risk to our forests is immense if we don't restore traditional open grassy understoreys. Unless we work with traditional owners to do this we will see mega fires every ten to twenty years. Mega fires that threaten our flora, fauna, society, our Aboriginal communities and that release massive amounts of locked up carbon into the atmosphere.

Timber is the only building product that is environmentally friendly, and which locks up carbon while new trees grow. Most of the rest of the world gets this simple concept, Australia is so far behind.