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

We have a viable and renewable resource in our own country that supplies a quality and lasting product to the people of Australia. Why would we pursue resources in other countries where environmental laws and practices have been known to be unsustainable, dangerous and conducted without regard to global environment outcomes?

If not harvested in Australia, where would we source timber from?

If not harvested now, when Australia is facing the largest housing crisis in history, when would we utilise the renewable resources available in our own backyard?

If not harvested by the Australian government legally, whom have extensive health and safety regulations, strict environmental regulating bodies, training requirements, industry knowledge, access to quality machinery and fair compensation to individuals to conduct this job, who would we offload this work to?

Sustainability should be a societal right for everyone not just the luxury of rich countries like Australia whom can offset their resources with imports from poorer countries.

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

As society continues to wage war on plastics, many companies have switched to plant-based products for packaging and food-handling. Timber products encompasses majority of items that are made from woody fibre material called pulp which are then used to manufacture items like cardboard and paper. According to the Smithers report on 'The Future of Fibre-based Packaging to 2027', fibre-based packaging is growing fast, with the market size projected to be up from \$425.4 billion in 2022 to \$503.4 billion by 2027. While the Smithers report indicates a strong trend towards the adoption of 'rigorous traceability and certification programmes', only about 13% of the world's forests are certified. Further emphasizing the promotion of forestry activities in Australia where many forestry operations, including NSW State forests, are managed, and certified under either the Responsible Wood Certification (AS4708), or the Forest Stewardship Certification (FSC) since 2006.

The rise of e-commerce and services like amazon has offered society a more convenient way of shopping and acquiring items globally. However, this shift in shopping culture solidifies the reliance on fibre-based packaging products and the increase demand for wood-based pallets to aid in freight. Without a commitment to sustain the trajectory of these markets with timber resources sourced from sustainable forests, governments will be forced to import from unregulated, unethical, and unsustainable operations offshore.

The cost-of-living crisis in Australia has been exacerbated by the housing-crisis which will only worsen if there is a reduction in the availability of essential infrastructure products made from affordable and sustainable Australian hardwood. Products like; timber utility poles for electricity, timber poles for ecological crossing tracks over highways, marine piles for jetty & wharf construction/restoration and boardwalks, timber girders for rural bridge installations, large beams for architectural designs in structural building upgrades. Lack of these key products will slow, halt,

or significantly challenge large infrastructure programs and the introduction of alternative products (composite, steel, concrete) to replace timber ones may increase project costs making them economically unviable.

This year Essential Energy has announced that by 2030 they will replace all hardwood timber poles with composites. As per a submission to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER), the state-owned Essential Energy said the switch was not only due to long-term uncertainty over hardwood supply in State Forests 'but also to boost resilience in bushfire-prone areas and reduce environmental impact on power line maintenance.' Although composite poles may offer attractive upfront advantages, according to the Assessment of Commercial Composite Power Pole Performance, a 2021 report has noted their limitation for high voltage use, and increased need for resources to manufacture these poles. The report has confirmed that 'Composite poles use an estimated 1,248 gallons of water per pole,' Polesvaer said, adding that wooden poles, such as Pentachlorophenol treated poles, 'use only 46 gallons of water per pole and by far the lowest amount of fossil fuels of any material.' Additionally, 'AquaAe Ter Inc. released a report stating that the CO2 output from a single concrete pole is 1460kg, steel is 784kg, and composite is 867kg' whereas a wooden pole absorbs 320kg of CO2 from the atmosphere.

In summary, all products delivered to consumers, used by consumers or lived in by consumers are a directly linked to the use of a timber product. Managed timber forests have been proven to supply the population of Australia with vital resources to build and develop while showing that the resource can be grown back and harvested again. Unlike mining for finite materials for alternatives replacements for timber products that will never be replenished.

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

Plantation harvesting represents a large portion of timber supply in Australia and is critical to the economical success and resource supply to the country. However, we are in a crisis, as population grows, the demand for timber will continue in parallel yet plantation estate area is in many states are stabilised or in decline. In the 'Australian plantation statistics update 2022-23' released by the Australian government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the report captures a -0.4% decline in total reported plantation area from 2021-22 to 2022-2023. This statistic is alarming considering 'The Australian Government has reframed the Support Plantation Establishment program and committed through the 2022,23 Budget \$73.76 million in grant funding over four years from 2023,24.' <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/forestry> Plantations have limited potential for expansion as they are limited by land availability. The ability to expand the plantation estates is becoming less economical as land prices continue to rise due to growing population needs like; more farmland to produce crops/meat and more houses to be built for people as urban sprawl continues. Without the ability to expand the plantation estates to keep up with the rise in timber demands, there is a crucial requirement for additional wood resources that only native forestry or timber importation can provide.

In addition to the challenges of plantation expansion is the looming threat of climate change which has been forecasted to have an increased fire danger, changes to rainfall patterns and extreme weather events in future. Softwood and hardwood plantations are monoculture crops that can be extremely vulnerable to fires, floods, and droughts. The recent Black Summer Bushfires 2019/2020 have proven how influential these climate change induced events can devastate commercial forests in comparison to native forested areas which have evolved to withstand fire and weather events. If an economy is solely reliant on plantation supplied wood, there is a potential for drastic impacts on future log supply and assurance of long-term supply which effects are outlined in;

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Former_Committees/Stand

ing_Committee_on_Agriculture_and_Water_Resources/Timbersupply/Report/section?id=committees%2Freportrep%2F024630%2F76029#:~:text=The%20Black%20Summer%20Bushfires%20devastated,plantation%20estate%20damaged%20or%20destroyed.

The expansion and maintenance of plantation estates is becoming increasingly difficult as time progresses therefore the government has looked to interject the timber market with an additional source. The future of Private Native forestry as a resource for timber supply is finite as many landholders harvest their land for an instantaneous revenue stream which lacks the silvicultural results for a sustainable rotational harvesting regime. Unlike the NSW Public Native Forestry Industry which is upheld to the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval , Protocols and Conditions (CIFOA) (330 paged document), private native forestry operations are conducted in accordance with the condensed Private Native Forestry Code of Practice for Northern NSW (82 paged document), which holds operations to looser tree retention requirements and ecological prescriptions which can lead to more drastic stem removal operations yielding worse environmental outcomes, longer regeneration periods and poorer formed trees being left to seed the areas. Often these operations are harvested once every 60 to 100 years compared to public native forestry operations which can manage multiple cuts over that period.

The future of softwood and hardwood plantations and the continuation of Private Native Forestry in helping meet timber supply needs will not fulfill the timber demand for the growing population of Australia.

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

State Forests allow me the opportunity to go camping for free on the weekend with my family and my foster dogs. We get to 4WD to areas off the beaten path and avoid all the crowded national park areas which are often booked out well in advanced. State forests allow people to experience nature as it always should be; free and accessible to anyone not locked behind steel gates.