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

From the research I have done, as well as personal observation living in a regional area surrounded by national park and state forest, the current practices of forestry are not sustainable on multiple levels. Every time a state forest area is cleared, biodiversity of plants and animals drops, erosion increases, which damages soil quality and native seed banks in the soil, and pollutes waterways. With the sudden increase of sunlight in the cleared areas, mass growth of invasive species occurs, further reducing food sources and hollow log housing for animals and insects that contribute to the balance of this remarkable resilient ecosystem. This increases fuel load, likelihood and heat of bushfire in regional areas.

The NSW government by law has the custodial responsibility to keep the environment of this territory safe for its citizens, and provide support in incidences of natural disasters that put citizens in danger. By supporting clear felling of native forests, the NSW forestry operations are actively compromising this custodial responsibility.

It is also my understanding that the NSW government currently financially props up the Forestry Commission, as it is not a sustainable business model or solution to our current timber needs as a society. The Forestry Corporation currently operates at a loss of tens of millions of tax payer dollars! Considering this, it is obviously time for alternate more sustainable solutions for all stakeholders.

In less than 230 years, new Australia has radically altered a landscape that was in a very balanced state of extremely rich biodiversity, with plants and animals found only on this continent, in a very extreme and harsh interdependent environment we barely understand yet. If we think ahead 7 generations of our own children, are our current forestry actions sustainable for them? Are we ensuring their environment is safe and abundant? With the current forestry clear felling of tracts of native forests, the answer is a resounding no, and we need to work together to find better ways.

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

Australian native forests in their most cared for and diverse states are one of this nations top primary assets for current and future generations; for tourism, natural disaster risk mitigation, food provision, medicinal discovery, climate heating management and future contribution to an ongoing inhabitable environment. These forests are an enormous cultural asset for Aboriginal people and for new Australians in equal measure. We are all part of the 60,000 old songlines and responsibility to Country now; protecting this natural envirolment is the bedrock of all of our cultural responsibility.

Forests are our temperature management systems, our pharmacies, our foodbank, our mental health sancuaries, our oxygen producers. With the amount of landclearing we have already done, we cannot afford to lose one more inch. Now is the time to pay attention to, learn, understand and tend our cultural heritage that is this unique ecosystem, for all Australians. There are currently 150 threatened species in NSW forests under threat by logging practices and 269

nationally listed threatened species trying to survive and repopulate in NSW, including the pollinators that support our food production, species that contribute to a healthy water supply. As people inhabiting this land, we can't simultaneously promote proudly our environmental assets, even expressing spiritual affinity with this land, and then actively destroy its elements; it is an act of cultural and collective madness.

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

A sustainable timber industry and the protection of native forests can coexist; it is not an either/or, however the logging of native forests is not part of this solution and it is time to work together to innovate new ways. Only 9% of the total log production in Australia in 2023 was from native forests and the rest was from plantations. Of that 9% in 2023, half were woodchipped and exported. Is that the wisest sustainable use of this precious asset? We have softwood technology now that is better suited to providing for our current timber and export needs, with market demands for native hardwood consistently contracting. This is where we should be investing future timber industry resources.

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

Plantations are our ongoing solution to local and export timber needs, and this source currently provides a staggering 91% of our timber needs. Less hardwood harvested wood should be used and sold for woodchipping, with more saw and veneer log allocations. While we focus on supporting outdated and contracting solutions to market needs we miss the opportunity of maximising the potential of our profitable softwood plantation industry segments.

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

Living in regional Australia in close proximity to national parks and native forests, I witness first hand the influx of visitors to enjoy and learn from these national assets, and there is so much more we can do to promote this asset, particularly as we move toward times of more global scarcity. The NZ approach to natural environment tourism experiences is a good model to emulate, as they take a whole-of-community approach, creating educative and 'comfortable' commercial experiences in natural environments (e.g. multiday hikes with commercialised transportation systems and cabin accommodation) many can benefit from. If we damage these assets, we also risk losing whole components of mature industries dependent on pristine waterways.

First Nations Ranger Programs are brilliant initiatives that create sustainable futures and solutions for multiple stakeholders and for our native forests and animals. This and similar other initiatives should be expanded. There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating how well this works and how effective First Nations knowledge is when applied to land care.

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

We must learn from the voracity and devastation of the recent wildfires and flood events in this state. The forests need to regain their balance after such recent cataclysm, the animals need to repopulate. This requires minimal disturbance of their habitats. Our NSW logging industry releases

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3.6 million tonnes of carbon every year, and reduces the volume of stored carbon by more than half of the original value. Climate change is accelerating and intensifying, so we have to quickly counteract this with forest restoration, not destruction, learning from the unlogged forests' natural resilience. We must pivot in all our industries toward climate and environmentally sensitive solutions, for the benefit of all our children.