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

The current operations are not economically or environmentally sustainable. The Frontier Economics report (November 2023) [https://assets.nationbuilder.com/natureorg/pages/2713/attachments/original/1699421741/23-11-02_Public_native_forestry_a_growing_taxpayer_burden_Final_report_STC_%281%29.pdf?1699421741] says that despite support of \$246.5 million of taxpayers funding to Forestry Corporation NSW since 2019-2020, there has been a loss to the hardwood division of Forestry Corp of \$28m. Subsidising the logging of public native forests by the Forestry Corporation is non-competitive and distorts the market away from the more profitable softwood plantation industry. Current logging in Bulga State Forest and other public owned state forests is threatening endangered species and their critical habitat, these species include the greater glider and koala. Native forest logging practices make forests more flammable and prone to high-severity bushfires. This risk is increased by climate change, higher temperatures and more extreme-fire-risk days. [The Forest Wars D Lindenmayer (2024)]

It is crucial that NSW government develops and implements effective programs to support the communities affected by the transition out of native forest logging.

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

Healthy, unlogged forests are critical to the whole environment, fresh water and First Nations culture and identity

Forests, particularly healthy mature forests, generate rainfall and cooling effects, protect waterways from erosion and water quality, and clean the air.

150 threatened species in NSW are directly impacted by logging native forests

Mature and unlogged native forests are critical for pollinators and play a key role in pollination. Native forests provide recreation and improved health outcomes and connection to place to locals and visitors alike.

First Nations people and communities have ongoing connection to native forests and forest landscapes are an integral part of spiritual connection to Country, cultural practices, values and knowledge

There are 269 nationally listed threatened species in NSW and the landscape scale of native forests means that native forest logging compromises many critical ecosystems and habitats throughout NSW

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

Native forest logging contributed only 2.4 million (9%) of the total 25 million cubic metres in Australia in 2023.

More than 50% of logs taken from native forests in 2023 were exported as woodchips

Hardwood logs taken from plantations made up 8.5 million cubic metres, and just 8% of these logs were saw and veneer logs, 87% of hardwood plantation logs were exported as wood chips. Hardwood sourced from native forests or plantations are no longer necessary for housing, construction, transport or retail.

Sawn and treated softwood logs and composite softwood timber products can substitute for all current uses for native forest and plantation hardwoods.

The market and demand for native forests is declining rapidly [Frontier Economics Report 2023].

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

Softwood and hardwood plantations currently provide 91% of Australia's log production.

A higher proportion of harvested logs from plantations should be prioritised as saw and veneer logs, rather than exporting them as wood chips.

High-end and luxury native hardwood products could only be selectively harvested on private land with strict conditions.

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

Native state forests cover an area of 2 million hectares in NSW and impact on a living conditions for many towns and communities, from water quality in reservoirs, to greater recreation and tourism opportunities, carbon storage and abatement, and reduced risk of wildfire.

The native forest hardwood division of the Forestry Corporation operates at a loss that runs into tens of millions of dollars, at the expense of NSW public taxpayers. It also additionally receives tens of millions of dollars in government grants.

The people of NSW should not be paying millions of dollars to destroy the benefits of public forests, biodiversity and critical habitat for threatened species.

Public native forests have a much higher economic and wellbeing value when they are allowed to function naturally and without logging.

First Nations Ranger Programs have been successful at managing the recovery and health of native forests. They provide worthwhile training and work and connection to Country for First Nations people. For example, the Githabul Rangers have shown how First Nations knowledge and management can restore the natural and critical function of forests in the landscape.

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

Native forest logging in NSW is estimated to release 3.6 million tonnes of carbon every year, the equivalent to 840 thousand cars on the roads per year.

Logging in a native forest reduces the amount of stored carbon by more than half of the original value.

Ending native forest logging will allow previously logged forests to regain lost carbon and make a significant contribution to meeting our emissions targets.

Climate change is driving increased risks for forest health and continued logging in native forests is exacerbating that risk.

Forests that have not been logged are more resilient to the changing climate and catastrophic fires that are occurring as a consequence.