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

Timber is a renewable building material and can assist the fight against climate change. It is important to have a well-managed, sustainable, state-owned forestry operation in NSW. This MUST be balanced with well-managed, timber plantation operations.

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

Old-growth forests, ie forest areas which have never been logged, must NEVER be logged. These areas contain and can protect threatened species of plants and animals, as well as Aboriginal cultural heritage values. In other areas, logging has to avoid the disturbance of threatened species of all types, and Aboriginal areas of cultural significance.

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

Over time the demand for timber is likely to rise, because it is renewable and because growing trees also help to fight climate change. Demand would also rise if there was a reliable source of timber grown locally. This is the opportunity for State Forests to be expanded to increase its operations to meet the demand for timber and play its part in fighting climate change.

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

A great deal needs to be done to encourage the planting of plantation timber. We purchased a small cattle property outside Gloucester, NSW, in 1989 for the purpose of planting timber trees. At the time there was no information at all available on what tree species we should plant, or how far apart they should be planted. The only NSW Forestry plantations at the time were hoop pine plantations in northern NSW. We looked up suitable timbers and researched if they were likely to grow in the area and guessed how densely they should be planted, ie we had no help at all. There were no carbon credits even considered for plantation timber, designed to be felled, until 2023. The initial system started in 2023 is impossibly complex. Plantation timber must play a significant part of the timber supply as current state forest holdings are insufficient to maintain the likely required amount. There must be adequate incentives to encourage Private Native Forestry, or there will never be enough. Incentives should include assistance with the establishment costs, which are large, and generous carbon credits, so there is some income from this land over the very long time until the timber can be harvested.

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 firstly need to improve management of its own forests. Logged areas need to have adequate individual trees remain untouched as seed trees, and/or need to be re-seeded. These

areas must be maintained, with operations such as thinning out of misshapen and poorly growing trees to allow the better trees to grow. The aim should be to produce timber of the highest quality. State Forests should be aiming to produce the full range of timber, including high-quality saw logs, not simply poles, which currently seem to be the major product. Aboriginal advice and management should be sought, especially bushfire risk management using aboriginal techniques.

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

For the whole 30 to 50 years a timber plantation is growing, the trees are aiding the climate by converting carbon dioxide back to oxygen and water. This is the other huge reason to plant timber. Plantation timber, both public and private, should be a big part of NSW ability to gain carbon neutrality.