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

It is a fact, that for decades our native forests have been ravaged by greedy corporate interests. Industrial woodchipping contributes most of the economic and environmental damage to our publicly owned native forests.

For decades, the hardwood logging industry has been a financial and ecological blight on our public forests. There is a well-documented history of violence and other wrongdoing in the logging industry, both internationally and in Australia.

It is of utmost importance to rethink native forest management. The industry needs major reform on many levels if we truly want to have a 'sustainable' future in our native forests. The good news is that if we do reform the industry to truly value our native forests and timber there will be increasingly better outcomes.

Reform begins with the immediate end to native forest woodchip exports. Until this fundamental change occurs other reforms will be mere band aids. This reform should be coupled with the reallocation of current industry subsidies to further progressive reform measures.

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

The devastation to our precious natural and cultural heritage is only too well documented. The destruction is witnessed by the ever-increasing list of threatened, rare and endangered species. Traditional forest management as practiced pre-colonisation favoured allowing forest trees to mature and managing regrowth through cultural burns. This would be especially practical around assets such as State Forest boundaries with human habitation. As Professor David Lindenmayer's research has also shown, mature trees are less fire prone than immature trees. Our current forest practices do the opposite by taking the mature trees and leaving the more flammable smaller trees and regrowth. The impacts of industrial logging has resulted in the loss of most of the mature forest ecosystems. The big trees were targeted in the 1970's and 80's verified by the many images of huge trees rolling out on log trucks. It is now a rare sight to see truly mature trees of 70 years or older.

A walk through most State Forest reveals fire prone regrowth. Unfortunately to remedy this will not be as simple as merely walking away and allowing natural regeneration. With populations of regional communities that boundary State Forest a new management regime will be essential. Cultural forest management practices would be well utilized around these populated areas with the help of local elders. This would provide ongoing benefits for the whole community.

Sustainable forest management encourages the biggest trees to mature and selectively allows for successive generations of mixed species regrowth and includes the creating of accessible asset protection zones.

Restoration of our damaged forests is difficult but improvement and renewal is an achievable goal. In fact, renewal is the way forward in our forests, with clever long term and sensitive management, we can increase habitat for our native species, capture carbon and improve water supplies.

Investment and focus on the environmental and cultural values of our unique native forests is the way forward to a better ecological and economic future for the benefit of all.

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

It is a fact that the vast majority of our native forest logs end up as lowest value woodchips, ravaged from our forests with outdated, devastating, industrial practices that benefit mostly foreign corporations and damage our environment.

Most of the timber used in housing, construction, mining, transport and retail in NSW is sourced from existing plantations or is imported. Victoria and Western Australia have vast hardwood plantations while NSW and the ACT boast large areas of radiata pine. These plantations already supply most of these industries' needs.

The small proportion of native forest logging that ends up being used by industry can easily be supplied with more sensible and sensitive timber getting practices. Existing and new 'clever' mixed species plantations, if properly maintained and managed, will provide more than enough timber needs for industry on an ongoing and improving basis.

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

Plantation forests are valuable for timber supply, native forests are more valuable left standing. Australia's timber needs can be met by existing and new plantations.

Private native forestry needs to be closely regulated to ensure that the benefits of production far outweigh the environmental consequences. Any subsidies to private operators have to be properly investigated, transparent, accountable and in the public interest in our public forests. The future, however, is bright. A future that can bring better financial returns coupled with improving ecological outcomes. Existing and new 'clever' mixed species plantations, if properly maintained and managed, will provide more than enough timber needs for industry in an ongoing and improving future.

As forest health improves over the longer term, new opportunities will appear for value adding and the production of premium craft timbers.

Of course, native forest should never be cleared for plantations

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

We acknowledge that State Forests, especially in recent times, has made some notable improvements. Recreational areas, roads and firefighting are often well managed. Efforts at engagement with our original peoples has had mixed success, over the years, but is the future of sensitive forest management. In fact, transparent and open engagement with the whole community is the positive future for our public forests.

However, there is much to be done. Driven by special interests, the short-term quick buck has been preferred over the public interest for far too long. An immediate end to export woodchipping would go a long way toward restructuring State Forests into a modern, accountable, sensitive organisation motivated by the public and ecological interest.

State Forests has managed our forests primarily as an industrial resource. Almost unforgivably, it has allowed the wanton mass destruction of our unique native forest heritage. It has been secretive and obstructionist, produced misleading and incorrect data, and, has repeatedly minimised thousands of breaches of its own regulations.

It seems State Forests are captive to multinational corporations, powerful union interests and entrenched politics. This is to the detriment of the environment and the public. Sweeping changes to the management structure, practices and culture of State Forests are needed to improve outcomes for our public forests.

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

Stopping the logging of native forests will improve forest diversity and save approximately 3.6 million tonnes of carbon from being released into the atmosphere each year. Allowing previously logged forests to regain lost carbon will take us forward in our quest to meet our emissions targets.

Mature forests that have been left to recover from logging are more resilient to the impacts of climate change, including catastrophic fire events. Continuing to log native forests increases the risks of climate change on forest and human health.