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

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Native forest logging is unsustainable. The Forestry Corporation's estimated amounts of harvestable timber continue to exceed actual amounts. Since 2018, when protections for mature trees were removed, logging has been intensified to obtain more wood from native forests. Logging of native forests reduces biomass and carbon storage, impacting on valuable water storage, exacerbating climate change affects.

Removing mature trees takes away valuable food sources and hollow-bearing trees. In New South Wales, 174 species rely on hollows for dens and nests. Logging in their habitat areas, which includes native forests, reduces the number of hollows created.

Native forest logging also increases fire threat and intensity – healthy, unlogged forests create dense, damp and less inflammable environments that discourage the spread of wildfires.

Logging increases erosion and promotes the penetration of weeds and other invasive species. It also increases waterway pollution, health and function, including streams and rivers - and, ultimately, the ocean.

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

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Healthy, unlogged forests are critical to our whole environment and to First Nations and non-First Nations culture and identity. Healthy mature forests generate rainfall, cool the landscape and clean the air - this is vital for our future and the well-being of the environment, humans and wildlife in New South Wales and beyond.

Native forests are a source of connection to place and areas of significant cultural and spiritual value to First Nations people.

In New South Wales, 150 threatened species are impacted directly by native forest logging. The logging that is occurring in the Great Koala National Park belies the name of this park – it is intended to be a dedicated area for the protection of koala hubs. Other critically endangered species such as glossy black cockatoos and gliders are also threatened by this logging.

Native forest logging compromises many ecosystems and habitats throughout New South Wales, in which 269 nationally listed threatened species reside.

Mature and unlogged native forests also play a vital role in pollination across the landscape, both inside and outside of forests. Without them, our already falling bee populations will continue to reduce – with catastrophic consequences.

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

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In 2023, native forest logging accounted for just 9% of the total log production in Australia and contributed 2.4 million cubic metres to the total 25 million cubic metres in that year.

Of the logs taken from native forests in 2023, 50% were turned into wood chips and exported to other countries. Hardwood logs taken from plantations made up 8.5 million cubic metres, and just

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8% of these logs were saw and veneer logs. Significantly, 87% of hardwood plantation logs were exported as wood chips.

Native forest and plantation hardwoods are not necessary for any of the uses identified in this section. More sustainable products that provide a viable substitute for all current uses of native forest and plantation hardwoods are available in the market. These include timber composites made from softwoods and sawn and treated softwood logs.

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The market and demand for native forests is declining rapidly. For example, Essential Energy recently ceased use of power poles harvested from native forests.

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

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Plantations already 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 being exported as wood chips.

Subsidising the Forest Corporation's logging of public native forests is non-competitive. It draws the market's focus away from the more profitable softwood plantation industry.

Native hardwoods for high-end and luxury products should be harvested selectively on private land only and under strict conditions. Public land by its very nature is not intended to be used, nor should it be permitted to be used, for the purposes of profit benefiting private corporations and their shareholders.

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We are the custodians of our native forests, including the species that dwell in them – it is our duty and responsibility to ensure they survive and thrive. Short-term gain from continued native forest logging is counterproductive, uneconomical, unsustainable and counter-intuitive, based on the science, in the long term. It is also lazy and short-sighted. We are living in an age when the need for possible alternatives and opportunities to improve environmental outcomes and mitigate climate change impacts far exceeds the blind continuation of past work practices that now threaten the very survival of our native forests.

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## **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**

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Unlogged native forests provide real and tangible benefits to New South Wales's entire ecology and economy.

Native state forests cover an area of 2 million hectares in New South Wales and impact on a range of living conditions for many regional areas in the state, including reservoir water quality, tourism industry opportunities, and carbon storage and abatement.

The Forestry Corporation's native forest hardwood division operates at a loss that runs into tens of millions of dollars at the expense of New South Wales taxpayers. In addition, the corporation receives regular injections of equity running in tens of millions of dollars. We should not be paying millions of dollars to destroy our own state's biodiversity and critical habitat for threatened species. The arrogant expectation that New South Wales residents will keep funding this anti-climate, anti-endangered species activity assumes that New South Wales residents are ignorant and apathetic about what is happening to native forests in our state and displays a callous disregard for the long-term health and survival of our environment, including native forests and their inhabitants.

The public is not so preoccupied with cost of living pressures not to notice the lack of action on this and other climate-affected issues by Labor and the Minns government.

The economic value of public native forests is far higher when they are not logged and are left to function naturally.

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### **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**

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Native forest logging in New South Wales releases an estimated 3.6 million tonnes of carbon annually. Putting a stop to native forest logging would equate to removing 840,000 motor vehicles from our roads per year.

Since forests are vital carbon storage hubs, logging native forests reduces the amount of stored carbon by more than 50%. If that's not a frightening statistic, I don't know what is.

If we end native forest logging in New South Wales now, then previously logged state forests can regain lost carbon and contribute significantly to meeting our emissions targets. Currently, New South Wales is not on track to meet its emission targets.

Continued logging in native forests is exacerbating the increased risks to forest health posed by climate change. Unlogged forests have greater resilience in facing the changing climate and consequent catastrophic fires.

We are the custodians of our native forests, including the species that dwell in them – it is our duty and responsibility to ensure they survive and thrive. Short-term gain from native forest logging is counterproductive, uneconomical, unsustainable and counter-intuitive, based on the science, in the long term. It is also lazy and short-sighted. We are living in an age when the need for possible alternatives and opportunities to improve environmental outcomes and mitigate climate change impacts far exceeds the blind continuation of past work practices that now threaten the very survival of our native forests.