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

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The logging of native forests reduces biomass and carbon storage, and removes mature trees, taking away valuable food sources and tree hollows which over 170 wildlife species depend on for dens and nests in NSW. These forest logging operations also negatively impact the function and health of our streams, rivers, and other waterways, increase fire threat and intensity, worsen erosion and waterway pollution, and facilitate the penetration of weeds and other invasive species.

The Forestry Corporation has over many years consistently overestimated the amount of harvestable timber in NSW. The yield from public native forests has declined by 40% since 2010, even though protections for mature trees were removed in 2018 and logging was intensified in an obviously unsuccessful attempt to obtain more wood.

Native forest logging is a major loss maker in every state. It continues only because of subsidies from governments. Financial losses and government handouts have exceeded well over a billion dollars in Tasmania and Victoria. Economic analyses have shown repeatedly that all state economies would be better off without a native forest logging sector. Despite the huge amounts of taxpayer funds 'invested' in the native forest logging industry, it employs remarkably few people, people who could readily be employed in other sectors such as in plantation logging and plantation wood processing.

The logging of native forests in NSW is fundamentally unsustainable.

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

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There are nearly 270 nationally listed threatened species in NSW and the significance of native forests at the landscape scale means native forest logging compromises many ecosystems and habitats throughout NSW. The 150 threatened species in NSW which are directly impacted by logging native forests now even include the koala.

Mature and unlogged native forests are critical for pollinators and play a key role in plant reproduction across the landscape, both inside and outside of forests. Forests, particularly healthy mature forests, play a key role in generating rainfall, cooling the landscape, and cleaning the air. Healthy and unlogged forests are critical to the whole environment and to both First Nations and non-First Nations people's culture and identity. They provide recreation and improved health outcomes to locals and visitors alike, and are a source of community pride and connection to place.

First Nations people and communities have ongoing connection to native forests and forest landscapes which are an integral part of cultural practice and knowledge. Native forests across NSW hold significant cultural and spiritual value for First Nations people. For example, Gulaga, west of Tilba Tilba, is a site of significance that I am personally familiar with.

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

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Ending native forest logging will serve to further stimulate investment in the plantation sector where there are the most jobs and the best profits in the forest industry. Indeed, 90% of all sawn timber in Australia, used to make roof trusses, floorboards, and furniture, already comes from plantations. Native forest logging predominantly generates woodchips, paper pulp, and packaging, not high-quality timber products. Plantations employ, on average, three times more people per hectare of trees than do native forests. In addition, the capital investment needed for one full-time equivalent position in a native forest logging operation is almost 10 times that needed for a full-time equivalent in a plantation.

Summarising, native forest logging contributed only 2.4 million of the total 25 million cubic metres of timber produced in 2023 in Australia, and half of the logs taken from native forests in 2023 were turned into woodchip and exported. Meanwhile, the market and demand for native forests is rapidly declining, with, as just one example, the recent example of Essential Energy moving away from power poles harvested from native forests.

Sawn and treated softwood logs and composite timber products made from softwoods can substitute for all current uses for native forest and plantation hardwoods. Hardwood logs taken from plantations made up 8.5 million cubic metres, while just 8% of these logs were saw and veneer logs, with 87% of hardwood plantation logs being exported as wood chips.

### **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 more than 90% of Australia's log production, and rather than exporting them as wood chips, harvested logs from plantations should be prioritised as saw and veneer logs. High-end and luxury native hardwood products should only be selectively harvested on private land under strict conditions.

Forestry Corporation subsidisation of the logging of public native forests is non-competitive and a complete waste of public money because it distorts the market and hampers the more profitable softwood plantation industry.

### **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 have real and tangible benefits to the entire ecology and economy of NSW, from simple outdoor pursuits, through tourism, diversity of species and wildlife, waterways, and catchments, to landscape and inspiration. Without logging, the 2 million hectares of native forest in NSW have a diverse and important impact on of living conditions across the state, not forgetting carbon storage and abatement as well as their significantly greater social and economic value.

The people of NSW should not be paying millions of dollars to destroy the biodiversity of their own state and critical habitats for threatened species. The co-benefits of ending native of forest logging extend to our biodiversity. Both NSW, and Australia more generally, have an appalling record on biodiversity loss; with our nation leading the world in mammal extinctions and our threatened species list growing ever year. Logging is a preventable threat that has serious negative effects on biodiversity. For example, almost every area currently being logged for timber production in NSW forests supports about eight threatened species. Stopping forest logging will dramatically improve the chances of survival of many of these unique Australian species.

Stopping native forest logging and land clearing, will help NSW reach its 2030 emissions reduction target. Other key benefits will include ending the subsidies that the NSW government pays to

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prop up the Forestry Corporation, reducing fire risks that are significantly increased by native forest logging, and slowing losses of biodiversity that results from logging.

First Nations Ranger Programs have been hugely successful at managing the recovery and health of native forests. Programs like the Githabul Rangers have shown how First Nations knowledge and management can restore the natural and critical function of forests in the landscape and help mitigate destruction by bushfires.

**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 NSW is estimated to release 3.6 million tonnes of carbon every year. To put this in context, halting logging of native forests and ending land clearing would achieve a reduction of between 14.5 million and 37.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent a year. This is greater than the annual reduction of 14.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent needed to meet Australia's 2030 target. A major reduction in emissions from logging and clearing forests would sit admirably along Australia's efforts to transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, now 40% of the electricity market and up from 15% a decade ago.

Unlogged forests are more resilient to the changing climate and catastrophic fires, and they store more than double the amount of carbon compared with a logged forest.

Climate change is driving ever-increasing risks for forest health, and continued logging in native forests is exacerbating that risk and putting the sustainable future of NSW at risk.