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

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As an environmental scientist, whose career focus has been to mitigate the poly crisis of climate change, the biodiversity loss/ extinction and water quality and security since the 1990's I am extremely grateful for this overdue review of the NSW Forestry Industry. Native forest logging practice in NSW are not sustainable and result in the removal of protections for key threatened species habitat. The Forestry Corporation's own regulations are frequently breached and the Forestry Corporation is often exempt from destroying Matters of National significance under the Federal EPBC Act. The Forestry Corporation has been convicted of breaching environmental protection laws on 14 occasions and fined hundreds of thousands of dollars however this has not deterred them from re-offending and committing further large-scale acts of environmental vandalism. This industry is heavily subsidised by the NSW government (\$247million over the last 5 years) and they run at a loss (\$28 million in 2023). The average re-numeration of the Forestry Corporation's top executives is \$552K per year which is more than the Prime Minister of Australia. This industry is clearly and blatantly unsustainable and is continually jeopardising our natural and cultural heritage.

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

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Our native forests draw down atmospheric carbon and are vitally important carbon sinks that must be protected from further degradation for their role in climatic stabilisation. Halting logging will allow forests to recover and helps them store more carbon and support our climate commitments.

Our native forests are refuges for many threatened species that rely on mature, intact forests. Logging native forests removes the older trees, removing hollows, habitat structure, food resources and other habitat vales critical for the survival of rare and threatened species, such as Forest owls, Yellow-bellied and Greater gliders and Koalas. These and many other mature forest-dependent species are already struggling from the impacts of the Black summer fires and continued logging may be a significant contributor to their decline and likely extinction. Our native forests provide important ecological services for our regional communities including water quality, erosion control and flow regulation.

Despite decades of unsustainable exploitation, these forests are still some of the most integral landscapes compared to surrounding and biologically barren cleared agricultural and urban lands. They hold significant cultural and spiritual significance for indigenous and non-indigenous communities alike by providing nature -based connection, eco-tourism and fishing.

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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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Nationally, our timber plantations have matured to the stage that they can provide for our high quality and composite timber product requirements. Shifting to plantation timber will speed up the development of, and transition to, sustainable plantation and timber industry practices.

#### **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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Hardwood and softwood plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production. The cessation of native forest logging subsidies will boost investment in sustainable timber production on private land which could rapidly make up the remaining 9% of our domestic timber requirements. Plantations produce higher-value timber and are more cost effective to harvest. Investment in hardwood plantation on previously cleared land would be driven by the cessation of native forest logging and would better meet Australia's timber supply needs into the future.

#### **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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The Forestry Corporation is currently financially unsustainable, relying on Government subsidies and yielding less timber than managed plantations.

Diverse forest management, particularly Aboriginal models, can enhance the cultural and social value of forests. It is now proven that cool controlled cultural burning in fire-dependent vegetation types has multiple ecological benefits and is a significant carbon pathway for the sequestration of charcoal (stable carbon) into the soil profile, waterways, wetlands and oceanic sinks. Healthy native forests provide essential ecosystem services to provide reliable, clean water resources for all human and non-human communities from the catchment to the coast. Upon the cessation of native forest logging in NSW, the recovery of our native forests after a century of abuse will need to be supported through weed, fire, erosion and transformer species management. Protecting and restoring our State Forests would increase the viability of their biological diversity and the probability of survival for the many rare and threatened species that are dependent on them. Our State Forests will have increased economic value through increased ecological management action, carbon storage, tourism, job creation and recreational opportunities over the long-term.

#### **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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The United Nations has declared 2021-2031 the 'Decade of Ecological Restoration' and it has been widely accepted that we must protect 30% of the earth's surface in its natural state for humanity to persist on this planet into the future. We are obligated to future generations to ensure an inhabitable earth and halting native forest logging is our urgent responsibility. Healthy forests are essential for reducing the impacts of climate change like wildfires and drought. Logging in native forests releases large amounts of carbon, contributing to climate change. Halting native forest logging will allow these ecosystems to recover and play a larger role in mitigating climate risks and supporting opportunities in carbon markets.