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**Organisation:** REEF Research Foundation

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**Location:** New South Wales

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

State Forest operations are governed by Regional Forest Agreements between Federal and State Govts, carried out by NSW Forest Corporation (Govt owned) under the Integrated Forest Operations Agreement (IFOA) in NSW, monitored by the Environmental Protection Authority. Private Property forestry harvesting operations are regulated by Local Land Services (LLDS) monitored and governed using Harvesting permits and operating under the Private Native Harvesting Code of Practice. Harvesting in State Forests is limited to less than 12 % of the total state forest areas and all areas are subject to regeneration plans and protection of wildlife, fauna, old growth trees, seed trees and must be subject to regeneration practices. There is no clear felling except in Plantations.

Based on the above it is submitted that forest operations are sustainable and responsible and should be maintained as an essential Industry in NSW.

Ref: Forest Corp website. DPI Website, articles on reefresearch.foundation website.

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

Current forestry management and harvesting practices, and regulations provide for protection of threatened species, involvement of the indigenous communities and continual monitoring and public scrutiny. Forest Corporation NSW manages over 2million hectares of forest lands in a highly regulated environment. Recent studies by CSIRO and DPI(Professor Brad Law) indicate that koala numbers as an example are actually increasing and are not as initially thought in the endangered species category. Forestry corporation provides for fire management services both within Forestry and for National parks and conservation areas contributing to their management and preservation..

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

According to the Ernst and Young economic report on NSW timber industry, approx \$2.9 billion is produced in hardwood timber revenue in northern NSW plus a further \$1 billion in value add. At the same time approx \$5billion of timber is imported from overseas to meet current demand. There is a growing demand for timber products, both hardwood and softwood. We have an opportunity and responsibility to grow the industry rather than reduce it and a sovereign responsibility to protect our own industry. The current shortage of material for housing is well known so we need a plan to address this. Construction, heavy industry and mining rely on hardwood timbers which is not immediately replaceable.

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

As mentioned in point 3. demand is far outstripping supply within Australia.

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With 2million hectares available in Australia for native hardwood use (being 12% of the total estate) there is only a maximum 55,000 hectares of Native hardwood plantations currently available. Given the growth cycles of 40 years plus to harvest, the current perception of replacement by plantations is not a viable one, nor necessary. Nor is it recognised that all timber species used can be grown in plantations. e.g Tallwoods, Terpentine, Iron bark, used in industries such as wharves, heavy industry, fishing, rural industry are not in plantations nor conducive to growing in plantations. therefore we need a program giving a combination of natural native hardwood trees in forests and more plantations as well.

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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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There is an opportunity for State Forests to work in tandem with National parks in delivering desired social, environmental and economic outcomes. The value of forestry science should be recognised, maintained and grown into the future. We have a history or world standard forestry management and also in fire control. Sadly most wildfires relating to the 2019 and 2020 fire period originated in National Park areas with huge floor loads, not managed to the level it could be and then placed undue reliance on Forestry resources for fire support. there is a case to combine this expertise to give better management in National Parks if properly funded, re educate people in proper forest management and to include any indigenous practices as well.

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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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it is well recognised that a proper managed forest will contribute to managing the carbon footprint (refer articles by Forestry Australia scientists); that harvested timber sequesters and stores carbon for a lifetime. Old growth trees while they should be protected, do not add to the carbon storage regime as they have performed their task in this area, then begin to decline. There is a need to continue to increase the carbon capture by increasing the cycle of regrowth and regeneration which happens through the planting, growing, harvesting, replanting cycle. This needs to be done with proper sustainable forestry management in line with climate change criteria.

therefore maintaining the timber industry and forests are part of the solution, not part of the problem. Also promoting and providing incentives for private industry to preserve non harvestable forest areas as a carbon preservation capture area needs to be further promoted and recognised. incentive