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

The current model of forestry in NSW is unsustainable economically, socially and most importantly ecologically. For public forestry, this is evident in the losses Forestry Corporation NSW makes each year that are subsidised by the public taxpayer which has been documented in their own reports. It is unacceptable socially particularly since the devastation of the Black Summer bushfires where in my region over 1 million hectares of land was burned, 34% of the North Coast Region of NSW, and 54% of National Park Estate was burned, 41% of State Forest and 26% of all private land (ref: Regional State of the Environment Report 2020 found at <https://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/environment/education-and-resources/new-folder/regional-soe-2020-summary-oct2021.pdf> . Ecologically this is devastating and has resulted in the increase in endangered species listings in NSW. Despite this, Forestry continues with ever increasing breaches with Forestry Corp found guilty, particularly in my region. Additionally, having lived next door to Boambee State Forest for nearly 20 years, the harvesting has changed and is now clear felling in native forest with no notification. In the past, operations have been courteous with mapping and notification provided to all immediate neighbours and harvesting carried out in a selective manner. In Decemebr 2023, we received no notification of harvesting along our property boundary and awoke to the sound of heavy machinery which scared my children. There was no notification, neighbours had trees falling on their gates and fences from the operations, and the areas were clear felled. There was a small sign erected at the main access point to the State Forest however no fencing or barrier was in place and it was not visible to the immediate neighbours. This posed major safety concerns for us as the neighbourhood trail bikes head up the trail regularly. It is evident there has been a rapid increase in areas harvested recently in all State Forests in our region with the online mapping adding compartments just prior to harvesting, indicating poor or rushed planning. Private native forestry (PNF) is also unsustainable and completely opaque. Until 2018, PNF approvals were placed on a public register by the EPA so the areas approved could be accessed by anyone. No private data was included, just total area of approval by each agreement. Since 2018, Local Land Services is responsible solely for PNF data and reporting, and they have repeatedly refused to provide the current data for environmental reporting and state under the revised LLS Act they are not required to report. This is a major flaw in the Act and needs to be changed. I prepare State of the Environment reports for Local Government and had many heated conversations with the LLS PNF staff who repeatedly refused to provide any data for reporting. My work also involves working with rural landholders on riparian rehabilitation (Rivercare). Many landholders hold PNF approvals, but recently have reported dissatisfaction with the contractors harvesting and have made reports to the EPA for destruction of rainforest, clearing along waterways, and have vowed never to have contractors again. Native vegetation clearing peaked in 2016 after the introduction of the Biodiversity Conservation Act, and with the impacts of the fires, has resulted in major habitat loss for many terrestrial species hence the increase in endangered species listings. The timber from our forests is harvested for low quality purposes such as wood chips, and is generally not used for building as plantation timber is used for building. Essential Energy recently

announced they would no longer use timber poles, so there's another product no longer required from our forests. The concern for jobs and impacts if native forestry ceases are unfounded as there are many jobs in private native forestry and in establishing plantations on already cleared land - which is where we need to go for a sustainable industry. There are many employment opportunities currently in my area of Coffs Harbour for all levels of workers. Truck companies are desperate for drivers, there is a shortage locally of truck mechanics, and if we could create the Great Koala National Park, those forestry planners could change to rehabilitation experts as they know their trees.

To summarise, all aspects of forestry are currently unsustainable economically, socially and ecologically. The way forward is to cease native forestry now, transition works to plantations on already cleared land, create national parks or recreation reserves in the forests using the funds that taxpayers would have paid to subsidize forestry, and rehabilitate the areas to allow a chance for our native species both flora and fauna to survive. We don't need toilet paper made from native timber, we don't need floor boards from koala habitat, but we do need to ensure our children and their children can have natural areas to enjoy and hopefully spot some of our unique and incredible wildlife. We should be paying people to conserve their vegetation, not prop up an industry that is so destructive and mismanaged. We also need to better control private native forestry and ensure it is transparent and well managed. Victoria and WA have ceased native forestry, NSW can do it too and move to a well managed plantation system.

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

I live on the North Coast of NSW, one of the most biodiverse regions in the World. I have rainforest remnants adjacent to my property and my partner and I have spent years revegetating the 2 hectares we own. We have koala habitat nearby with our neighbours having sighted some, and we have local creeks with endangered Eastern Freshwater Cod, platypus, a number of endangered frog species (mixophyes balbus sighted earlier this year), quolls nearby, and an amazing number of bird species. We have two species of bower bird that dance on our driveway (satin and regent) and have many owl species as well as raptors. Our property borders Boambee State Forest which has until recently housed all of these creatures (except the fish). Clear felling in December 2023 impacted the fauna and we are trying to monitor the fauna remaining with the help of our neighbours. The community uses the state forest for recreation and it is very popular for dirt bikes, mountain bikes, 4WD, walks, horse riding. So the forests are incredibly important environmentally and recreationally. Culturally, we are fortunate enough to have a large Aboriginal community within the Gumbayngirr Nation, with many of our place names of Gumbayngirr origin. The rivers in this area are very important to the Gumbayngirr people and their camps were up in the nearby rainforest. Their knowledge of the areas natural environment is very special and need to be retained and taught. The forests are of great importance to them.

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

The demand for timber products is not as desperate as industry and some politicians portray. It is well documented that the majority of timber products used in houses and construction are from plantations, not native forests. Native forest timber tends to supply wood chips and is used to create low value products such as toilet paper. This is reported in Forestry reports and has been assessed by many, particularly Professor David Lindenmayer of ANU who has researched forests for decades and is an incredible wealth of knowledge that should be guiding our forestry management. Recently Essential Energy revealed they would no longer be using timber poles in favour of a fibreglass and resin pole that is fire resistant. Therefore we can easily cease State

native forestry as the products are really not of high value and are subsidised by the NSW tax payer. Plantation forestry needs to be increased on already cleared land to enable State native forestry to cease. Better controls and transparency is required around Private Native Forestry which has been exploited in my area. Additionally, the North Coast has an abundance of Camphor laurel trees which have recently been shown by CSIRO to be harder than radiata pine, and therefore would be a great resource for construction timber, particularly for indoor applications.

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

I support the increase of plantations for timber supply but only on land already cleared. There must be no clearing of vegetation for plantations. I have major concerns with Private Native Forestry as it is currently not transparent in its reporting, we have no idea of the area currently under PNF approval, and there is little reporting of areas harvested. In my experience through my work there have been many breaches by contractors where they have harvested koala trees, rainforest trees, cleared along waterways, and harvested well outside the approved areas. There needs to be much tighter management of PNF for it to be considered sustainable, and better recognition of koala habitat mapping in the approvals process by LLS. I would prefer the majority of timber be sourced from plantations that are closely managed. We also need to do more to reduce demand for the low quality products - who need toilet paper from a tree? Recycled is great!!

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

I don't see a role for State Forests in the future. State forestry needs to end. The areas of State Forest need to be converted to National Park, recreation reserves, flora reserves etc and then it will be possible to deliver a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes, and include Aboriginal communities in this. So State Forests needs to change to become State recreation reserve managers, or planners for plantation forestry.

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

I don't support carbon markets that use natural areas to compensate for their pollution. A carbon tax on polluters is needed to fund the restoration of our forests. A huge amount of rehabilitation is required within state forest to ensure there can be climate change adaptation for our ecosystems which could be funded from carbon taxes. Intact forests are our best weapon against climate change. They are better fire mitigators, keep the temperatures lower, and maintain a wetter climate. Prof David Lindenmeyer is the experts on this and has written about how it can be achieved. We are losing flora and fauna species rapidly to climate change. Myrtle rust is causing the extinction of whole genera. The need to enhance our forests is urgent and will provide protection to some extent from climate change, which is worth more than anything.