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

Forestry operations in New South Wales (NSW) is a critical topic, particularly regarding the sustainability of forest management practices. This submission argues for the immediate cessation of native forest logging and calls for a shift towards sustainable forestry practices that prioritize environmental integrity and responsibility, cultural values, and the long-term economic viability of the timber industry.

Current forestry practices in NSW are under scrutiny due to their unsustainable nature, resulting to habitat loss and decreased biodiversity. A shift towards sustainable forestry practices is essential for meeting both ecological and economic factors. According to the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979), sustainable land use must heed the needs of future generations, suggesting practices like native forest logging are inherently incompatible with long-term sustainability goals (NSW Government, 1979).

In the future, forestry operations should focus on enhancing the sustainability of timber production through improved management practices, including the adoption of agroforestry and sustainable plantation systems. Studies indicates that intensively managed plantations of both hardwood and softwood can meet demand while minimizing environmental impacts (Hobbs & Harris, 2001).

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

Forests in NSW provide crucial environmental roles, including carbon sequestration, water filtration, and habitat for threatened species. The state is home to many threatened species, such as the Leadbeater's Possum and various eucalyptus-dependent birds, which are negatively impacted by logging activities (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2020).

Additionally, Aboriginal cultural heritage values must be factored into forestry management. Traditional land management by Aboriginal peoples, which have been shown to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem health, offer important insights into sustainable forest management (Berkman et al., 2020). Respecting Aboriginal rights and knowledge is paramount for fostering a holistic approach to forest management.

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

The market for timber products in NSW, particularly for housing, construction, and retail, is a significant factor in designing sustainable forestry policies. The construction industry predicts a continued increase in demand for timber, which necessitates a secure supply chain that does not compromise environmental values (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

To address this demand sustainably, it is necessary to expand softwood and hardwood plantations. The establishment of plantation forests can provide a steady supply of timber while allowing native forests to recover and thrive. Private Native Forestry (PNF) also plays a crucial role in meeting timber supply needs, enabling landholders to manage their forests sustainably and

contribute to timber production without resorting to native forest logging (Forestry Corporation of NSW, 2021).

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

The transition to plantation forestry, both softwood and hardwood, will be crucial in meeting timber demands sustainably. Softwood plantations have the potential to provide a consistent and reliable timber supply for the construction and paper industries. Studies indicate that these plantations can be managed sustainably, with rapid growth rates allowing for quicker rotations compared to native forests (Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, 2022).

Hardwood plantations also present an opportunity for sustainable timber production. These plantations can be designed to copy natural ecosystems, enhancing biodiversity while still producing timber. Research from the Forest and Wood Products Australia highlights well-managed hardwood plantations can contribute significantly to wood supply without the negative impacts associated with native forest logging (Forest and Wood Products Australia, 2021).

Private Native Forestry (PNF) plays a critical role in the future of timber supply in NSW. It allows landholders to manage their native forests for timber production while ensuring compliance with environmental regulations. By encouraging sustainable management practices, private native forestry can enhance biodiversity and improve forest health. According to the NSW Department of Primary Industries, it has the potential to offer an additional timber supply without compromising ecological integrity (NSW Department of Primary Industries, 2023).

Moreover, private native forestry can serve as a buffer against the uncertainties of market demand and changing environmental conditions. With the correct policies and support, landholders can engage in sustainable timber production, thus meeting local and national timber needs while maintaining the ecological values of their forests.

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

State Forests can maximize the delivery of diverse environmental, economic, and social outcomes through fluid management strategies. These include the promotion of mixed-use landscapes that integrate timber production with conservation goals. Establishing diverse management options, such as Aboriginal forest management models, can improve both ecological integrity and social equity (Kimmerer & Lake, 2015).

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

The potential for forests to deliver carbon and biodiversity benefits is immense. By halting native forest logging, NSW can significantly enhance its carbon sink capacity. Sustainable forest management practices that prioritize biodiversity can support emerging carbon and biodiversity markets, aligning with Australia's commitments under international climate agreements (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 2021).

Mitigating and adapting to climate change risks requires a comprehensive assessment of the greenhouse gas emissions associated with different uses of forests. Transitioning to a model that prioritizes conservation and restoration over logging can mitigate risks and enhance resilience against climate-related impacts (IPCC, 2022).

Conclusion

Ending native forest logging in NSW is not merely an environmental necessity; it is an opportunity to reimagine forestry operations that honor cultural heritage, enhance sustainability, and respond to market demands. By investing in sustainable plantation practices, recognizing Aboriginal cultural values, and leveraging carbon and biodiversity markets, NSW can secure a prosperous future for its forests and communities.

References

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