

Public submission

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Organisation: *Weathertex Pty Ltd*

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Reconstituted Hardwood Cladding Manufacturer – Raymond Terrace NSW

Weathertex Pty Ltd

Topic 1 Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

Sustainability in forestry is crucial for balancing economic needs with environmental health. In New South Wales (NSW), a diverse forestry industry is vital not only for ecological resilience but also for adapting to climate change impacts. Only 0.5% of NSW forests are harvested annually. Sustainable practices ensure that forest ecosystems remain healthy before during and after harvesting, while also supporting local economies and communities. NSW forestry contributes a significant \$2.9 billion to the economy and employs over 8,900 people directly. The forestry industry in NSW requires a multifaceted approach that includes regulatory frameworks, community involvement, economic incentives, and innovative practices

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

The environmental and cultural values of forests in NSW are interconnected and essential for a sustainable forestry practices. By adhering to existing regulations, supporting Indigenous heritage through specific species use, and promoting Indigenous employment, the forestry industry can ensure that both ecological (including selective harvesting to protect threatened species) and cultural values are preserved for future generations. These efforts contribute to a more resilient ecology and a diverse forest ecosystem while honouring the rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal communities.

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

The demand for timber products across housing, mining, construction in NSW is substantial and interconnected. A reduction in native forestry operations would significantly impact the availability of essential and desirable hardwood timbers (for utility poles, marine piles, and high-quality housing products), is a significant resource affecting infrastructure, economic stability, and local employment. Ensuring the sustainability of forestry practices is crucial to meet the ongoing demand for timber while supporting the diverse needs of these critical sectors. Weathertex produces approximately 2,000,000m² of reconstituted timber cladding annually for use as wall cladding and flooring underlay in Australia and around the world. We export ~8% to Europe, Asia and New Zealand. ~30% of our sales contributing to the construction industry within NSW. Weathertex is based in Raymond Terrace NSW directly employing approximately 150 locals and directly and indirectly contributing to the local economy as well as helping to contribute to the wider transport industry by distributing the products to our customers including resellers.

A perverse outcome of the closure of State Forests in Victoria is that now 50% of the timber demand in Victoria (as this did not significantly change) is now imported from Canada and 50% from NSW and Tasmania.

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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

A geographically diverse timber industry is vital for supporting a range of businesses and communities across NSW. This diversity ensures that resilience and regeneration (replanting) continues. Private Native Forestry (PNF) allows landholders to manage their native forests sustainably, contributing to the hardwood timber supply without relying solely on public native forests. PNF is crucial, it cannot entirely replace the ecological and social values provided by public native forests. Maintaining a balance between both is essential for biodiversity and long-term forest health. Addressing Land Availability, Financial Returns and Commercially viable growth cycles are required. Weathertex uses a mixture of State forest timber through Forest Corp NSW and Control source timber through PNF suppliers (historically ~25% of timber used within our process).

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 play a crucial role in maximizing a range of environmental, economic, and employment and social benefits for communities in NSW. By adopting diverse management strategies, including Aboriginal forest management models, these forests can effectively balance economic viability with long term ecological sustainability. A focus on ongoing sustainable practices not only benefits the environment but also enhances community resilience and prosperity, ensuring that State forests continue to provide essential resources and benefits for future generations.

Harvesting contractors maintain critical forest infrastructure such as roads and drainage channels. Also their equipment is essential during the fighting of floods and fire.

If the timber industry is shut down in NSW the NSW government would likely be forced down the same path as the Victorian Government that has

Signed “Forest and Fire Services Agreements” with 17 contracting businesses following the closure of native timber harvesting from the state’s forests

- Each agreement is for a minimum 3000 service hours across three pieces of equipment (a bulldozer, excavator and harvester)
- The purpose of the agreements is to ensure a fleet of equipment are available to be deployed to combat bushfires
- The government has allocated \$72.5 million annually for the next five years for this program and other forest management works

Topic 6. Opportunities to realise carbon and biodiversity benefits and support carbon and biodiversity benefits, and mitigate and adapt to climate change risks, including the greenhouse gas emission impacts of different uses of forests and assessment of climate change risk to forests

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Forestry management in New South Wales is increasingly focused on ecological sustainability, playing a vital role in carbon sequestration and biodiversity protection. This alignment helps to: Enhance Carbon Sequestration and Protect Biodiversity. Forests role in Carbon markets (including Carbon and Biodiversity Credits) helps align economic benefits with environment stewardships by mitigating and adapting to Climate Change Risks (such as Sustainable Forestry Practices (thinning and harvesting of new growth mature trees only and ecological burning) along with Assessing and adapting to Climate Change Risks). Addressing climate change risks through proactive management strategies will be essential for ensuring the long-term health of NSW forests and their contributions to both the environment and the economy.