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

As someone who has grown up deeply connected to the landscapes of New South Wales, I've always believed that our forests are more than just trees to be cut down they are the lungs of our state, the roots of our communities, and a vital part of our shared identity. I've personally seen the devastation that unsustainable practices can cause, from the rising intensity of bushfires to the eroding water systems that once nourished our land. This submission reflects not just data but my sincere desire to protect the forests that have given so much to all of us.

I can't help but feel a deep sense of unease when I look at what's happening to our native forests. We've seen the consequences of overestimating the amount of harvestable timber it's like a house of cards built on false promises, collapsing as yields from public native forests have plummeted by 40% in just over a decade. Since the removal of protections for mature trees in 2018, the forests have been subjected to intensified logging, trying to squeeze every last piece of wood from these ecosystems. But this isn't just about timber. Every mature tree removed is a loss of carbon storage, a home destroyed for the 174 species that depend on tree hollows for survival. It's heartbreaking to know that logging these forests actually increases the threat of fire and floods, both of which we've been facing far too often. The more we log, the more we compromise water quality, leading to erosion and polluted waterways. This isn't the kind of future I want for NSW where we destroy our own land to meet short-term goals.

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

For me, forests are sacred places, and I know I'm not alone in feeling this. Whether you're part of the First Nations community or not, forests hold incredible cultural and spiritual significance. They are more than just natural landscapes they are living entities that have nurtured life, stories, and traditions for thousands of years. When I walk through a forest, I feel a deep sense of connection not only to the earth but to the people who have come before me, who have walked these paths with reverence and respect.

I've been deeply moved by the connection Indigenous communities have to these lands, seeing forests as more than resources they are part of their identity, their ancestors, their way of life. The practices of Indigenous forest management, like cultural burning and land care, are rooted in an ancient wisdom that understands the forest as a being to be cared for, not simply harvested. Logging doesn't just clear trees; it erases a part of our shared heritage, breaking that sacred bond between people and place.

We must recognize the immense cultural loss that comes with the destruction of these forests. Every tree, every stream, and every animal holds stories and knowledge that have been passed down through generations. The forests are living cultural archives, and once they are gone, that knowledge risks disappearing forever. Protecting these forests means honoring the history, the culture, and the sacred relationship that Indigenous people have upheld for millennia.

At the same time, we must consider the natural world that calls these forests home. There are 150 threatened species directly impacted by the logging of native forests. These species, from the

gliders who nest in hollow trees to the powerful owls that hunt under the canopy, are silent witnesses to the devastation. Their survival is deeply intertwined with the health of the ecosystem. Every tree lost weakens the intricate balance of life that forests sustain cooling our planet, generating rainfall, and supporting pollinators that are vital to our agriculture and food systems.

We're losing more than timber we're losing the lifeblood of our environment and the cultural essence that makes these forests irreplaceable. It's not just a loss for Indigenous people but for all of us who call this land home. These forests give us a sense of place, of belonging, and without them, we lose part of our identity and our future.

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

I understand the need for timber, especially for construction and housing, but native forests should not be the answer. When I learned that logging in native forests only contributed 9% of Australia's total log production in 2023, it really put things into perspective. Half of those logs were turned into woodchips for export, and that's just unacceptable. We are sacrificing our forests for short-term, low-value exports, and it's simply not worth it.

The fact is, softwoods and composite timber products can easily replace native forest hardwoods. The market is already shifting away from native forest products, as we've seen with Essential Energy choosing to phase out the use of native forest timber for power poles. It's clear that the demand for native forest timber is rapidly declining, and I believe we can meet our needs sustainably with plantations and alternative products

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

The potential for plantations to meet our timber needs is huge. With 91% of Australia's logs already coming from plantations, we should be focusing our efforts on making this system more efficient. I would love to see more of our plantation logs used for higher-end products like saw and veneer logs, rather than exporting them as woodchips. We need to prioritise sustainable practices that deliver real value, both economically and environmentally.

The fact that public subsidies continue to prop up the outdated and destructive logging of native forests makes no sense to me. The future lies in managing our forests wisely, not in subsidising industries that damage both the environment and the market. If we focus on plantations, particularly in using private land under strict sustainability standards, we can meet our timber needs without sacrificing biodiversity or climate resilience.

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, in my view, are one of our greatest assets. They cover 2 million hectares and play a crucial role in everything from water quality to tourism and carbon storage. Yet, we're watching them get logged at a financial loss NSW is paying tens of millions of dollars to destroy the very ecosystems that sustain us. It's a situation that simply doesn't add up.

I've seen the positive outcomes when forests are managed in partnership with First Nations communities. Programs like the Githabul Rangers show how Indigenous-led management can restore and heal our landscapes. These forests have the potential to provide so much more clean air, carbon sequestration, tourism opportunities, and community connection if we allow them to thrive naturally and stop exploiting them for short-term gains.

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 reality is that logging native forests is one of the most counterproductive things we can do if we're serious about fighting climate change. Every year, native forest logging in NSW releases an estimated 3.6 million tonnes of carbon that's the equivalent of putting 840,000 more cars on the road. By simply stopping native forest logging, we could make a massive contribution to our emissions reduction targets.

Not only does ending native forest logging help mitigate climate change, but it also allows these forests to recover their carbon storage capacity. We're seeing the devastating impacts of climate change on our forests already droughts, fires, extreme weather events and continuing to log them only worsens those risks. Protecting our forests is one of the most effective ways we can adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

In conclusion, I'm writing this with a deep sense of urgency and hope. We have the power to make real, lasting changes that will protect our forests for future generations. By transitioning to plantation timber, ending native forest logging, and supporting Indigenous forest management, we can create a future where our forests continue to provide for us both in terms of timber and as a vital part of our ecosystem, culture, and identity.