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

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Firstly, please note I am overseas at present with limited ability to research and write a comprehensive submission. But what I write is based on my 41 years experience as a professional forester in NSW.

Sustainability is very hard to define and most people don't know what it means. Cutting down a whole forest, then letting it regrow for 200 years, in a continuing cycle, is potentially sustainable. In short NSW harvests much less than the potential growth of forests available for harvest, and the state of the forests after over 100 years of harvesting is testimony to this.

For the future it is essential that proper research-based silviculture (and the research has been done) is able to be applied, to ensure that forests can regrow following harvest. Some of the current rules applying to harvest intensity are not allowing for proper and full regeneration and growth of the next crop.

Our eucalypt forests have evolved to respond to and take advantage of disturbance, either by fire or wind. Harvesting them mimics this.

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

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In my opinion these aspects are better looked after than ever before. However some conditions of harvest apply the precautionary principle of 'if in doubt, don't harvest' whereas the science would suggest otherwise for many species that are disturbance-dependant, such as rare wattles, Boronia, koalas ... to name a few.

Science needs to be used, not emotion or gut-feel.

In addition, the alternative to not harvesting or forests must be taken into account, and the impact of those alternatives fully considered. Nothing we humans do is without some impact. By harvesting or own forests, we can manage the impact. If we shut down harvesting, someone somewhere else will fill the void, at what environmental cost. I'm currently in another country with some forest management happening. I can tell you your environmental management in Australia is first class!

Many regrowth State forests have been transferred into National Park, and most people will tell you these forests are 'pristine'. Surely that tells something about the impact of harvesting on environmental and cultural values.

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

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As above, unless demand is managed (and with a growing population it is only increasing), people will want products to fulfill a particular purpose. If they can't get native forest timber, for the values it provides, they will seek an alternative.

For example, what is the alternative to durable hardwood decking in a marine environment? Treated pine? Plastic? Concrete? Plantation grown hardwood? Every alternative has a greater environmental impact than sustainably harvesting regrowth native forests.

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

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There is without doubt a role for all of these. My experience is with eucalypt plantations. In short, unless they are grown on good land (which is expensive) and full and proper silviculture can be applied (which involves herbicides, and clearfelling), then they are doomed to economic failure. And given that, I don't see how they can be regarded as providing a better environmental outcome. Anything less than optimum growing conditions will cost the state, provide an inferior product and fall short on production potential.

Pine cannot satisfactorily replace hardwood in many applications.

PNF is a critical element to the industry, particularly on the north coast, to provide economies of scale.

#### **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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In a global context, if Australia is to be a good corporate citizen, we cannot morally afford to lock up our forests, then take products from others. It is simply transferring the demand elsewhere, with consequent environmental impacts.

The role of State Forests in providing for multiple uses at the same time as providing regional social and economic benefits, has been clearly demonstrated for over 100 years. I don't believe that anyone can demonstrate that the impacts of harvesting or own native forests are any worse than what the alternatives are.

#### **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's simple. Sustainably harvesting forests locks carbon away in the products produced, and in the regrowth that follows. As a bonus, the products replace alternatives, such as steel, plastic and concrete, all of which are heavy carbon emitters in their production. It is a no-brainer and the IPCC agrees. Sustainably harvesting forests is carbon-positive.

Biodiversity benefits in the same way. Harvesting provides for a range of growth stages and habitats. And provides products, the alternatives for which are poor for biodiversity. If waste timber could be used for fuel, that would also replace carbon emitting fossil fuels. On a global scale, if we accept that the planet is warming, biodiversity is best addressed by any alternative that absorbs, rather than produces, carbon.