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Submission ID: 202687

Organisation: N/A

Location: New South Wales

Supporting materials uploaded: N/A

Submission date: 10/5/2024 8:22:10 AM

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

I have worked in the timber industry for 15 years and manage a mill cutting native forest timbers in northern NSW. The continuation on the industry without deforestation is evidence of its sustainability. There is confusion about how forests and forest operations are managed. Forest operations are not indiscriminate obliterations of resources and habitat. Harvest operations are planned and audited. Only 18% of state owned forest are accessible for harvest, the remainder is in the reserve system. Of the 18% more is reserved during the planning to protect special trees, habitat, wildlife and waterways.

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

Threatened species and cultural values are assessed before a logging operation in native forests. Protection zones are put in place before the event and audited after.

Planning for planting a plantation and harvesting the end product also requires environmental and heritage checks to ensure protection.

The lack of public understanding of forest operations is evident when reading some of the submissions put forward for this panel. Media coverage of forest activities, including misrepresentation of plantation clear felling as native forest harvesting, and one sided reporting increases this problem.

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

The demand for timber from our mill is steady. If the mill is no longer able to source local logs locally the demand will be filled by imported products. As well as my concern for the loss of jobs and industry is the conditions where the logs are sourced overseas. The forest industry in Australia is highly regulated and scrutinized. We have the responsibility as a developed country to manage and supply our own timber, not decide that it based on opinion that its morally corrupt and transfer our supply needs to less regulated countries and cause decimation of their forests to meet demand.

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

PNF provides log to the market, however this is based on the landowners wants, not industry quota. Milling of hardwood plantation timber at the mill has been for low grade pallet product only as dictated by the size and property of the available planation logs. Future plantation supply will most likely become viable, but not for at least a decade. The volume of plantation log available will be dependent on the uptake of plantation planting. The cost of land and planting in north east NSW is prohibitive, many plantations have been removed in the last decade as they were unmanaged and of poor form.

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 are managed to deliver a range of outcomes. The small percentage of state forest harvested each year and the checks before and after are tools to manage the ongoing supply of timber and environmental outcomes.

Discussions about the financial viability of Forestry Corp assume an undervaluation of the resource by the state and industry. However, they don't take into account the cost of professional foresters, ecologists, on ground assessments, mapping, auditing etc.

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 regrowing of native forest after a logging event and the planting of a new rotation after harvesting a plantation captures carbon. The timber from the logs stores it.

Realizing biodiversity and environmental outcomes from our forests will not come from stopping harvesting in native forests, or has been suggested, selective logging in plantations. Active forest management provides road and track management for pest plant and animal control, access and fire brakes for fire fighting. Importantly, active management maintains skilled workers who are available and able to fight fires. The knowledge base of how a fire will move in the landscape, where it can be attacked to bring it under control and the machines to do it will be lost.