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

Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment Inc (FOKE) is deeply concerned about unsustainable native forest logging that is destroying Australia's environment.

FOKE is very cognisant of the importance of forests particularly as it has worked for over thirty years defending remnant forests in the Ku-ring-gai local government area that is 22 km north of the Sydney CBD in NSW.

Ku-ring-gai has four endangered ecological communities and two critically endangered ecological communities. These include Ku-ring-gai's remnant forests - Blue Gum High Forest, Duffys Forest Ecological Community, Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest and Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest.

Although forestry ended in Ku-ring-gai in the 1850s, the removal of the forests has had profound environmental costs with local extinction of many species including the koala.

With this historical background FOKE is cognisant of how important forests are and how important it is to end logging of NSW's native forests.

Logging of native forests needs to stop because it removes critical food sources and hollow bearing trees that 174 species in NSW rely on for survival.

Native forest logging increases fire threats and intensity of bushfires, erosion and water pollution, and the penetration of weeds and other invasive species. It also has detrimental impacts on the health of waterways, streams and rivers, estuarine lakes and the coastal waters.

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

FOKE understands the important environmental and cultural values of forests because Ku-ring-gai's forests have shaped the historical and cultural heritage of Ku-ring-gai. Many early Sydney residents of Ku-ring-gai became conservationists because of their realization of the urgent need to protect forests. This includes Annie Forsyth Wyatt (1885-1961) who formed the Ku-ring-gai Tree Lovers' Civic League and the first National Trust of Australia.

Forests also have enormous cultural importance to Aboriginal people.

Forests are important to people's health and well being. They keep the air and water clean. They keep temperatures cool.

Unsustainable logging of NSW native forests is now threatening the survival of over 150 threatened species in NSW and damaging their ecosystems.

If we are to halt the biodiversity extinction crisis (269 nationally listed threatened species in NSW) we must end deforestation of our native forests.

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

FOKE finds it very disturbing to know that half of the logs taken from native forests were turned into woodchip and exported in 2023.

FOKE understand that sawn and treated softwood logs and composite timber products made from softwoods are a viable alternative forestry substitute.

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

FOKE understands that plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production. Subsidising the logging of public native forests by the Forestry Corporation is non-competitive and distorts the market away from the more profitable softwood plantation industry.

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

Protecting NSW's 2 million hectares of native forests is critical to protecting NSW's water quality, ecotourism industry, First Nations Ranger Programs and carbon storage.

It is unacceptable that Forestry Corporation's native forest hardwood division operates at a loss that runs into tens of millions of dollars, and which taxpayers subsidise.

NSW citizens should not be paying millions of dollars to destroy NSW's biodiversity.

Public native forests have a much higher ecological value that needs protection.

FOKE argues that it is time to end the logging of Australia's native forests.

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

FOKE is deeply concerned that logging native forests contributes to 3.6 million tonnes of carbon being released into the atmosphere every year.

When Australia urgently needs to urgently reduce its carbon emissions it makes no sense to continue logging native forests.

We are in desperate environmental and climate crisis. We must protect our native forests if we are to protect our climate and biodiversity.