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

As a long term resident of the Mid North Coast of NSW (for over 30 years) I have significant concerns regarding the ongoing sustainability of native forestry operations undertaken in our area and indeed across NSW. In 2019-20 we experienced massive bush fires in and around my property and local area that devastated the natural environment. over 5.5 million hectares were burnt across NSW and 3 billion vertebrate animals were killed or displaced, (soe.epa.nsw.gov.au). Old hollow bearing trees that provide homes for wildlife were toppled, for months after the fire at an alarming rate. I firmly believe we have a responsibility to keep all remaining natural forested areas in our region intact to allow wildlife to survive and thrive into the future. I believe that current forestry practices undertaken by NSW forestry corporation are not sustainable, they are not profitable to the NSW taxpayer and they must be reduced or preferably stopped. There has been a significant reduction in the amount of timber taken since 2010, which has resulted in an even more aggressive and intensive approach to logging activities, which further impacts a range of threatened species and wildlife that needs intact forests to survive and thrive into the future. Research has indicated that NSW Forestry Corporation overestimates the amount of timber that is available for extraction and this means that they will encroach further and further into remaining forested areas. The current NSW government has promised a "Great Koala National Park" for our area which is laughable as most areas slated for inclusion into the park are being intensively logged as we speak. There is significant history of intensive logging of areas before then proclaiming them as National Parks, as occurred around the Kempsey area, eg: Kumbatine and Carrai National Park. To say National Parks allow for wildlife to survive/thrive and biodiversity to exist does not accurately represent a viable or sustainable future. These assets are too valuable at a time of climate crisis to allow logging which fragments and destroys valuable habitat. I believe there is a role for timber workers into the future to use their knowledge/skills to grow a 'proper' timber plantation industry that does not wrongfully state areas of natural forest are 'plantations' as we are currently witnessing in State forests of the Mid North Coast of NSW. Future forestry in 'real plantations' where trees are grown and nurtured then harvested is where the future of NSW Forestry Corporation lies if it is to be sustainable.

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

As stated above there are significant environmental values of intact forests. There are 269 nationally listed threatened species in NSW and currently 150 threatened species are being directly impacted on by logging undertaken in NSW State Forests by the NSW Forestry Corporation. Wildlife makes no distinctions between a National Park and a state forest, to them it is all habitat. Continued logging in state forests amounts to 'state sanctioned' destruction of habitat needed by these animals, which inevitably will lead to more threatened species and possible 'extinction' particularly in localized areas. State Forests are places where more and more people are enjoying leisure activities, they are a valuable cultural space for all Australians as we move into an uncertain future for our children and grandchildren. The value of forests to

humanity can not be underestimated. Aboriginal people have experienced alienation and disconnection to country due to past government policies and the legacy of that continues to this day. Having areas where connection to country can be maintained is paramount for future well-being of indigenous Australians, as well as the wider Australian community. These areas on the Mid North Coast of NSW are diminishing, National Parks are getting crowded, the future of our well-being and people living sustainably in this region depends on governments and communities to act now to protect the natural environment in all its forms.

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

Forestry Corporation and governments do not provide a true representation of demand for hardwood timber products, sourced from NSW State forests. This amazing resource is often turned into woodchip for export, such as what happened with half of the logs taken from native forests in 2023. This is an appalling statistic and a huge waste of such a magnificent resource. I live in a timber house with beautiful hardwood timber floors, so I am not against the use of timber products in buildings. However anyone driving past construction sites in NSW can see that the wider building industry uses predominantly softwood and composite timber products in housing construction. The demand for native forest timber is rapidly reducing as the recent example of Essential Energy moving away from power poles harvested from native forests in all areas. Even Railway sleepers are no longer being made from hardwood logs sourced from native forests. It is not a true statement to say that timber harvested by NSW forestry corporations from native forests is required by the building and construction industry or in the transport or retail industry in general in NSW. Go into any 'Bunnings' or hardware store and you will see softwood and composite timber products for sale. Please do not misrepresent what native timber products are being used for or misrepresent their future demand, the future is clearly in plantation softwood timbers and composite products. When governments provide taxpayer subsidies to the NSW Forestry Corporation to log native forests for timber production it gives an unfair advantage to that part of the industry and doesn't truly reflect the value of these resources, or the value of softwood plantation timbers.

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

There is a clear future for plantation timber, especially faster growing softwood plantations. Hardwood plantation are also part of the mix and indeed this should be the future of the forestry industry in NSW and Australia. The expertise of current forestry workers could be transitioned into this industry. If governments were forward thinking and used the current subsidies to the NSW Forestry Corporation to build the plantation industry for the future. This must reflect real plantations not existing native forests that are being 're-labelled' as plantations, which is misleading and inaccurate. Currently plantations already provide 91% of Australia's log production, so why are we continuing this arcane industry of native forest log harvesting, destroying the very things we need for a sustainable future. There is a huge 'value add' to timber products in things like making timber veneer products that can ensure high end products for use in construction etc. Private native forestry occurs throughout our area on private land. On the whole I can see a responsible use of these resources, in most cases. However oversights and clear regulating of this area of timber harvesting is required to ensure that this significant area of operation is sustainable and responsible. High end timber products made from beautiful hardwood, such as my timber floors, should be available but at the true cost of production, not subsidised as occurs now.

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

Firstly when we don't log native forests there are huge benefits to local communities. Intact native forests maintain clean water supplies that we all need to survive, they provide valuable recreation areas, clean air and ensure biodiversity into the future. Anyone who has a historical understanding of where medications originally came from as well as many breakthroughs in medicines, many compounds were first isolated from living plants in pristine environments. We don't know what is out there that could be a huge economic and social benefit into the future. As I have stated there is a role for transitioning forestry workers into being custodians of forests, timber plantation workers, passing knowledge to future generations that will maximise the economic and social values for all NSW residents. There are many examples where industries have had to change, alter or even close down due to the changing world we live in, take manufacturing in Australia for example. We can transition the workers, this argument should not come down to 'what about the workers' we have a social and economic responsibility to support their transitions into other roles, as we have done in many other industries. As a retired vocational educator (TAFE NSW) that was my job, to support people to learn new skills, to meet demands of new industries, it can and is being done. The involvement of Indigenous people in forest management can only be a benefit to all of us. It will benefit individual Indigenous Australians and their communities as well as the wider community, especially if we are open to learn from the cultural knowledge that is present in these communities.

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

It is clear that mature native forests store massive amounts of carbon, which can only benefit and work towards mitigating climate change risks. I believe there is a big future in supporting carbon markets of the future, where locking up carbon in forests is seen as a significant tool to adapt to climate change. We must as a community take these forward steps to ensure a sustainable future for everyone and for future generations. Long term thinking is what is required to ensure this occurs and unfortunately the short term nature of political cycles and governments wanting to maintain their power is inhibiting this. Research has estimated that existing native forest logging in NSW releases 3.6 million tonnes of carbon every year, significantly contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Catastrophic fires that are occurring more frequently are a part of fractured forestry environments. Intact forests that have not been logged are more resilient to the changing climate and changing fire environment we are now experiencing. When you think about the impact of these fires on greenhouse emissions and climate change it is a huge concern. We need to protect these environments to ensure our common future in a sustainable and livable world. Thank you.