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

Native forestry operations in NSW are heavily regulated and are certified under either the Responsible Wood Certification or the Forest Stewardship Certification. These certifications provide equal emphasis on environmental, social and economic aspects, which meets the definition of true sustainability. State forests maintain a natural structure, with trees of different species and ages naturally germinating and growing side by side. These forests have large swathes set aside for habitat, biodiversity and waterway protection, and others are periodically harvested for high value, high quality products. NSW state forests are made up of around 1.8 million hectares of native forests of which 1% is harvested in any given year. Forestry Corporation has released independently assessed 100 year wood supply models for hardwood timber yields from state forests. This modelling ensures that these forests are managed to produce timber responsibly and sustainably for generations to come ((Forestry Corporation website “ Forestry Corporation - Timber volumes and modelling & DPI website - 2018 NSW Regional Forest Agreement Review and Renewal). And post fire update - 2019 “20 Wildfires (nsw.gov.au)). It is far more sustainable under every metric (environmental, economic, social and climate) to utilise timber grown in our own well regulated backyard rather than to import timber from other countries that have little to no environmental oversight.

Harvesting of hardwood timbers is far more strongly regulated than in the countries where the hardwood demands of our community that are not met domestically are drawn from. The imbalance between locally produced hardwoods and the imported hardwoods required to meet our societies needs grows each year in favour of imported hardwood timber. This is an unsustainable approach that offshores our responsibility to other areas of the globe, which is short sighted, selfish and lazy. It also comes at the cost of local jobs and industry.

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

Native forestry in NSW is highly regulated under the IFOA’s (Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals), which include measures for protecting environmental values such as water quality, soil health and habitat for endangered species.

NSW forests host numerous threatened species, including the koala, which is supported by current forest management techniques.

Planned and supervised selective harvesting ensures minimal temporary and localised impact on koala populations, and forests are managed to protect critical habitats like riparian zones, rainforest and old-growth forests’. The State Forest estate is managed under a multi zone system called the Forest Management Zones (FMZ) which protect environmentally sensitive areas and fit management options to the sensitivity of the environment they cover. The FMZ is more dynamic and encompassing than the land use controls open to National Parks and can lead to better long-term results for threatened species especially those that are disturbance related.

State forests allow conservation minded individuals to hunt feral animals such as pigs, deer, goats and dogs, which are allowed to run rampant through national parks.

State forests are not hidden behind locked gates like national parks are, and this allows people from all over the world access to enjoy and benefit from them in a multitude of ways. From filling their freezer with meat or fish, to fossicking, camping, 4wding, and enjoying the wonder that is native forest managed for multiple uses, the cultural values are far more tangible for a larger number of people in state forests than national park.

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

NSW State forests are amazing places and Australians use products made from wood and its components EVERY SINGLE DAY.

Australia is a net importer of timber and forest products. As a Nation, we already have a high demand for these sustainable products. Our native forests can and do support sustainable timber harvesting, supplying our local communities. Ceasing native forest harvesting will increase our timber imports, increase our carbon deficit through international shipping and transport, increase our local cost of living, and have no positive outcome for the environment over our current forest management regimes.

NSW and Australia's population has grown dramatically over the past 45 years. With this growth has come a concurrent increase in the volume of hardwood products used by the population. Over this same time there has been a significant reduction in the volume of hardwood product produced by Australia and NSW in line with the transfer of most of the available estate into reserve systems. This difference in hardwood product that fills this gap comes from imported hardwood products like Kwela and Merbau.

We also need native forests to supply the vast majority of power poles, each of which removes carbon from the atmosphere, in the order of 320kg per pole. The embedded energy in, and carbon produced by the manufacture of, composite or steel poles outweighs this by orders of magnitude.

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

The industry must be geographically diverse, this supports a range of businesses and communities while allowing certain sites to regenerate.

Private Native Forestry (PNF) is seen as crucial for meeting hardwood timber demand but cannot replace public native forests'.

Plantations have potential for expansion, but they are limited by land availability, land suitability, low financial returns and long growth cycles needed to produce commercial timber'.

The last federal government investigation into the growth of hardwood plantation estates and their contributions to the timber demands of Australia found that it would not provide the same level of hardwood timber sawlogs that the native forest estate provides until at least 2050. Since this report, the area of hardwood plantation in Australia has shrunk due to the failure of the MIS that were driving the growth in planted area. Thus, it will be well after 2050 when the Hardwood sawlog volumes provided to this country's' are met by planted forests.

While the vast majority of the plantation estate is replanted after harvest, a small area is converted to other land uses each year. In recent years, these areas have exceeded new establishments, resulting in a decline in the total plantation estate (Snapshot of Australia's Forest Industry, Linden Whittle).

Logs harvested from native forests, hardwood plantations and softwood plantations are not always directly substitutable for one another. This is because of differences in species, age and silvicultural practices which affect the properties of the wood and what they can be used for. The range of species used in hardwood plantations is very limited, as many are not economically

viable to grow in plantation situations due to their slow growth rate. If native forests are to be locked up and harvesting not allowed to occur, products such as poles, piles and girders would either no longer be available, or supply would be significantly diminished. Poles, piles and girders are high value products that are mainly used for structural applications including utility service poles, pole frame homes, foundation supports for wharves, boardwalks and buildings (piles) and support beams in bridges (girders). The benefits of these products include durability and cost effectiveness, excellent service life, high strength and fatigue resistance, wide range of usefulness, and most importantly, THEY STORE CARBON.

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

The greatest benefits to the community will be realised when State forest management is focused on the longer term future rather than annual profitability.

State forests contribute to a range of outcomes including economic development, regional employment, and environmental sustainability’.

Timber industries are a critical employer in regional areas, providing stability to local economies’. There are a wide range of economic, social and tourism opportunities that are very poorly catered for under the National Park model implemented in NSW. The dollar value of these additional values have been costed on numerous occasions and their value to the community always shows that a hectare of native state forest generates many times the economic, social and intangible value to the community that same area would provide if it were with a National Park.

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

700+kg of Carbon Dioxide Equivalents are REMOVED from the atmosphere for every cubic metre of sawn hardwood product produced by native forests in NSW. Forestry is the only carbon positive industry. Timber imports from regions with poor environmental practices or long transportation distances (like tropical forests) can contribute significantly to deforestation and CO₂, emissions. For instance, importing timber from deforestation-prone areas can lead to substantial emissions, equivalent to millions of tons of CO₂, globally, comparable to the emissions of major fossil fuel-consuming nations like India. The type of wood product, transportation method, and processing efficiency all play critical roles in determining the total carbon footprint.

In contrast, sourcing timber domestically or from regions with robust sustainable forestry practices typically results in a lower carbon footprint due to reduced transportation emissions and better forest management practices, including sustainable harvesting and replanting’ (IDH - the Sustainable Trade Initiative)’(Committees - UK Parliament)’(Allen Press).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recognises that sustainably managed production forests that maintain carbon in growing trees while producing an annual yield of timber deliver a large, sustained climate change mitigation benefit.

Wood also has a much smaller carbon footprint than other building materials such as steel, aluminium and concrete. That’s why responsibly-sourced wood can play a big part in helping mitigate climate change. Timber imports should be discouraged if Australia is to reduce its contribution to the global carbon footprint and avoid the risk of price spirals due to increasing international competition for a diminishing world supply. Forest management in NSW is aligned with ecological sustainability, contributing to carbon sequestration and biodiversity protection’.

Public submission

The role of forests and wood products in mitigating climate change through carbon markets is recognized, although greater recognition is needed to fully leverage these benefits’.