

Public submission

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Submission

Hogans Sawmill – 72 years in [REDACTED] NSW

Hogans Sawmill is located in [REDACTED] in north east NSW and has been a family business for 72 years. The second generation in the family – Kathy Lane – operates the family business.

Hogans Mill employs 6 full time staff of which only one is a family member. All the staff are local with the exception of one who travels from [REDACTED] and they all have mortgages and families to support.

The Mill Manager has been in the business for 52 years having started straight from school. Four members of staff have specialised training and skills relating to sawmilling and if the NDSW government decided to close native forestry whether crown or private – those people would have difficulty finding alternate employment.

The mill operates entirely on private native forestry and some contract cutting or purchase of logs from other mills. We are supplied by a harvesting contractor. Hogans Mill is equipped to saw larger logs such as brushbox and ironbark which many of the larger mills are unable to saw. It is a co-operative ecosystem of sawmilling and trading that results in very particular products from each mill.

There is a real diversity of mills and products in our regions which means that we all can work co-operatively but are not necessarily competing. The key to our success as an industry is a diversity of businesses and going forward there should be a level of equity to ensure that diversity remains.

Our mill produces scantling and pegs for construction and building, heavy duty fencing and rails and we also provide specialised orders for flooring. Our pegs are managed through both NSW and Queensland disability workshops which provides meaningful employment for many disabled workers.

We supply many of the builders timber wholesale yards in the Northern Rivers, provide some retail from the mill. Our products are sent from Taree through to the Gold Coast.

Additionally we provide specialised timber for local government bridges.

Approximately 60% of our operating expenses is spent locally on services such as machinery repairs etc and we purchase timber strapping from Newcastle and safety equipment for staff from Brisbane. In fact we support a number of business on the coast of NSW and Qld.

We sponsor as many events as possible locally such as golf days, Pumpkin and Watermelon Festival and school events. We like to contribute where we can to our local community.

Submission

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

The demand for timber over the last four years has been at an all time high but with the economic slowdown and increasing cost of living, the construction and building supply chain has slowed.

There are always cycles in the building trade, however with the increasing focus on using timber, we may as an industry not be able to supply our domestic demand. It would be a great shame to see Australia massively increasing imports of timber.

Owing to the insecurity of supply, we as a business have not invested in upgrading our equipment. If the NSW government gave the industry resource security, then businesses like ours would invest in upgrading the mill and equipment and improve efficiency.

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

We tend to not use plantation timber – particularly hardwood as we do not believe it has the strength or durability for the type of construction product we make. The heavy duty timbers are not generally plantation timbers anyway. There has been only a few people investing in plantation timber with very long ROI – they wait 40 plus years before the plantation becomes a supply.

If the state forest supply of hardwood is closed then the pressure placed on private native forestry will be immense and those of us who have centred our business on that area will most likely be pushed out by price.

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

While we work on private native forestry, we are aware that State Forests are highly qualified managers of their forest areas and utilise the most up to date equipment to ensure good conservation outcomes and have a large number of programs around First Nations management of fire.