

# Public submission

**BRENT O'NEILL**

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**Organisation:** *N/A*

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**Location:** *New South Wales*

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**Supporting materials uploaded:** *Attached overleaf*

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To whom it may concern,

My name is Brent O'Neill and I have been an employee at Gelletly Red Gum Firewood Barham NSW, working in the red gum industry for almost 7 years. We're located in Barham on the NSW/VIC border, bordering the Murray River. Koondrook being our twin town and very much apart of this Red Gum Industry driven community alongside us.

I am a Forwarder operator, working in our local red gum forest picking up logs that have been harvested and loading them onto trucks to be sent back to our timber yard to be processed for either firewood or mill logs to be sent to our local timber mill, Arbuthnots Saw Mill, which has been operating over 100 years.

If I am not operating the forwarder, I'm in the timber yard either driving the bell or operating the docker cutting the red gum logs we harvested out of the forest to be cut down to block firewood, which then can be also split down to firewood for smaller fire places.

I take pride in the work we do and the all round daily operations we do out the forest. It is rewarding to see our hard work pay off after we have harvested and cleaned up throughout the forest where we have been working, we help keep the revegetation from becoming overgrown, taking preventative action needed in the case of any bush fires that may occur. The work we do is beneficial to everyone.

I genuinely enjoy my job and the work we do!

Our local Red Gum Timber Industry is a vital part of our twin town community. Without this industry it would be greatly impact, not only our communities, but the local businesses would also feel the negative effects of us being closed down.

If the timber industry was to close down, it would mean a great loss of jobs for our community, with limited job opportunities as it is, for those who cant or are not able to find suitable jobs they would be faced with having to relocate for work.

Then also being faced with having to relocate your family, it effects your spouse, children have to move and change schools.

Having to uproot your entire family and livelihoods, the flow effect of having to relocate for work also effects, if your having to care for loved ones, elderly parents, family.

Peoples mental health would also be effected by closing the industry down, the added stress of losing a job, financial stress, no stability.

Our local community groups also benefit from our local timber industry operating businesses, as well as our schools and local sporting clubs. Loss of donations and sponsorships would mean loss of money to support these groups/clubs/teams/schools.

Having an overgrown forest, no longer being maintained and looked after by us employees and employers of the industry would be a high risk of becoming fire dangers, but with the loss of essential fire fighting equipment, occurring as another flow on effect of being closed down, "Who's going to be there to help fight bush fires?" Closing this industry down will mean putting the community and peoples livelihoods at risk!

If this industry were to close down, I personally would have to move away to find another suitable job, which also means I would have to uproot my family, my partner would also need to look for other employment, as well as taking our kids out of school and care and relocating to

find a new job, home and schools. Not only will this effect us financially, but the added stress to the current living costs on top of everything else, having to worry how this will effect my family.

The mental effects this will have on myself and partner, if the red gum industry was to close, will be devastating for all, it will have an ongoing ripple effect through the whole community!

Brent O'Neill