

Public submission

CRAIG & TRACEY MCPHERSON

Submission ID: 204962

Organisation: *N/A*

Location: *New South Wales*

Supporting materials uploaded: *Attached overleaf*

Submission date: 10/13/2024 4:13:44 PM

Dusty's Logging Pty Ltd – NE NSW

Dusty's Logging P/L was established three years ago as another part of a family business that has been in operation now for 6 generations. It is a specialist harvesting operation that also provides private property maintenance such as boundaries, fire trails and roads.

Our company generates sawlogs, poles, piles and girders, veneer logs and firewood.

The services we provide are native hardwood harvesting on private property and farm forestry as well as earth moving and clearing for roadworks. Our staff have specialist skills and training in machine operation, log grading and segregation and silviculture and biodiversity. They carry the required qualifications for driving HC/HR trucks, have chainsaw and machine tickets.

We operate from a base in the Grafton regional area and cover the mid north coast and Tablelands. There are three full time staff and two part time staff of which two are of First Nations/Torres Strait descent. They all live locally with their families and have homes with mortgages to meet.

We spend 50-70% of our operating expenses on local business and services and 20% to services beyond our local region. We require fuels and oils, tyres, tools, parts, mechanical services, machinery, vehicles, chainsaws and food supplies. We often have to source similar supplies from out of our region as far as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Some supplies come from Wauchope and Toowoomba.

Should native forestry be reduced or closed, our business would close and our staff would lose their jobs. Employment is not easy to find in our area.

The timber we supply to pole yards and sawmills keeps 100s of workers employed along with providing their families with an income.

Should our business close, we have very expensive specialist machinery that would not have any asset value.

The knock on effect of closure would be significant for the other businesses that service us and other forestry companies.

We are sponsors of a number of local community events and in 2023 we sponsored a local girl who was contesting the Australian Rodeo Queen Quest which she won and this enabled her to travel to Canada and the USA.

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

Our family company feels quite uncertain about the future of native forestry because of the significant volume of untrue propaganda being spread by a minority and being believed by a majority. This in turn increases the level of unrealistic rules and regulations which are always changing and making it less and less viable to operate.

Submission

There are some forestry operations that are under constant threat and vandalism from protestors that do not contribute to society but cause enormous damage and loss of economic activity. This then leads to the falsely inflated costs brought about by incompetent governments system and activist bureaucrats. We are experiencing ridiculous levels of insurance premiums because of the forest activism.

The best things about native forestry are that it is a renewable self-seeding resource; it does not require mining the earth or require massive amounts of irrigation to produce a consumer product; and it is an active forest management system that results in a healthy forest for animals

The current regulations need to be reviewed in light of the onerous and often unproductive outcomes which should be prepared to repeal those rule sets that do not achieve real environmental protection and clarify those regulations that are open to interpretation and not achieving environmental protection.

In relation to plantations, while I accept it is a good option for softwood, there is still a view that it is a monoculture system. While I understand that some of the hardwood plantations are two or three mixed species, many are single species and produce timbers that are not suited to those products that rely on quality, strength and durability. The native forest produces such a wide variety of species and products. We are aware that there are now campaigns to shut down plantations so they are as much susceptible to being locked up.

To establish plantation to the scale required for supply land would be required that resulted in clearing existing native forest or take up existing productive farm land to plant a plantation that is susceptible to changing legislation and may in 45-50 years be unable to be harvested.

Why do this when there is a plethora of native forest that simply grows and regenerates very well under natural circumstances.

Currently there needs to be a better balance between silviculture and biodiversity. As regulations are tilted too far towards biodiversity. Forest practice is over regulated and many regulations are unnecessary as they do not achieve any environmental protection.

I have watched over a long period of time politicians and bureaucrats making decisions about the future of the timber industry, never visit a forest operation and glean their information from a desk top report. It is time that all political representatives and policy advisers and regulators actually visit an operation to gain first hand experience of what occurs. I would happily invite the Panel to one of our operations.

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

When many of our state forests now annexed into national parks, were actively managed, harvested for timber and farmers grazed their cattle, the forests were in a much healthier state and you were able to walk through easily. There were bushfires that were far less hot. Now they are national parks, they are overrun by pests and weeds and decaying trees.

Submission

Instead of the cool burning fires the farmer with local knowledge would light, that would promote better grass growth and healthier trees, the forests in national parks are left, and we have the massive fires that destroy flora and fauna and the ecosystem is critically damaged

and sometimes destroyed. The national park estate is so large now that it cannot be properly or actively managed. Why would you create more unmanageable land!

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

The demand timber is well above what can be domestically supplied under the current conditions. The trade deficit in imported timber is above \$4.9 billion and a great deal of the timber is imported from unregulated countries.

Alternative materials like concrete and steel have a massive carbon footprint and are not renewable. They don't just simply grow on the earth's surface and store carbon like trees do. The energy inputs into making concrete and steel are huge and yet timber is produced from trees that regrow. I am concerned that some of our timber imports are from rainforests overseas. We do not allow harvesting in Australian rainforests as we understand their important ecological role but happily bring in imported rainforest timber. The height of hypocrisy.

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

In relation to Private Native Forestry (PNF) there is currently not enough timber available through PNF to be able to meet supply. There is no room for expanding the demand for that resource particularly as the heavy regulation on private property deters landholders from participating and if the crown supply keeps diminishing then pressure will be placed on PNF for supply and the prices will make it prohibitive for smaller mills.

In relation to plantations, firstly there is not enough cleared land to establish them and it takes 45 plus years before they can contribute to supply so what happens to the mills during that time. In order to meet supply in the future, It would require either clearing existing native forest to establish plantations or replace good farmland with plantations which will impact on food production.

Despite popular commentary, hardwood plantations once planted and maintained with thinnings do not provide a wide range of comparable products to the current native forest product. Particularly in products like poles, pile and girders and bridging timbers, plantation timber cannot replace all quality or durable products.

With the hardwood industry in NSW contributing \$2.9B to our economy and employing nearly 9000, it makes no economic sense to close the industry. Tourism never replaces the value of the timber industry. Read what has happened to the red gum industry post partial closure – devastation of towns and business

Topic 5 - The role of State Forests in maximizing the delivery of a range of environment, economic and social outcomes and options for diverse management, including Aboriginal forest management models

Submission

Although we operate in Private Native Forestry, we are aware of the state forest operations and how important it is to have those larger scale supplies to the timber mills. It is not possible to provide any more than about 30-35% of supply from private forestry, so state forests under the management of Forestry Corporation have the expertise, science qualified

professionals and the scale to produce the hardwood timber required and manage their forest sustainably. We would like to see Aboriginal fire management rolled out in both national parks and state forests at scale.

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.

We can simply make a statement that there appears to be an academic industry of questionable science that is influencing the politics of the day and ultimately is responsible for pushing up the cost of living.