

Public submission

JACINTA FERRIS

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My name is Jacinta Ferris, I have been an employee in the Red Gum industry for 3 and a half years. I work as administration at [REDACTED] Red Gum Firewood in [REDACTED] NSW. I work in the office but also have been trained up to help fight fires for Forestry NSW

I love my job and the people I work with and have learnt and learning new things every day on how we as an industry take care and maintain the forests that surround us.

Most of the time I am in the office, but I also get to go out to the forest and see how the harvesting side of it all works, and how this helps our forest with regrowth, and selective harvest operations to make it safer from fires with also making sure the wildlife is left with homes.

If the forests where we harvest red gum were to be closed down, there would be over 130 jobs lost in the area, and this doesn't just affect the mental health of individuals it affects multiples, families with children (like mine, family of 6), this would put so much pressure on myself trying to find another job with the flexible hours I have, to be able to look after my children. If we had to relocate both myself and my husband would need to find new jobs, my son would have to try and transfer his apprenticeship and my 3 girls would have to move schools, which would not do their mental health any good either, and then there would be the financial side, to relocate we would have to look at selling our house and then finding another one to buy in our price range and this would take months, so then we would have the extra cost of traveling, living these days is expensive enough with out having extra costs on top, it just wouldn't work, which again would put a lot of strain and stress on our family, mentally, physically and financially.

If the red gum industry was to close it wouldn't only have a impact on our families, it would have a impact on the community, families wouldn't be able to do extra things like sports, go out for meals, buy clothes from local shops, or if most people had to relocate then the towns lose out even more with having less people which will cause more businesses/industries to close. If the industry closes, it's not just this industry that will suffer it will have a huge flow on affect in the whole community.

The community also relies on tourists that travel to our towns, over the summer months a lot of these people come to our towns and camp in or visit the forest, along the rivers and creeks, if we stop harvesting these areas, they will be to over grow for people to do this and way to dangerous as the fire risk would be extreme. Also if we stop harvesting the forest the fire risk get will be a lot higher, also if the industry is shut down we don't have us as trained firefighters to go out and get it under control, we won't have the equipment (water trucks, dozers, skidders, etc) to help make fire breaks , which then in turn it would be catastrophic to say the least as there would be too much fuel in the forest for the community to battle, which then will also lead to people loosing homes, businesses and maybe even lives and no one wants any of these things.

My suggestion is the people that are looking to continue a sustainable industry and the red gum forests, come and have a look at how it all works and talk to the people working in this industry, what I have seen and learnt over the last 3 and a half years is unbelievable and has given me and my family a lot more of a insight of how the forests around us works.

Come see for yourselves how it all works and the benefits of the industry and harvesting before destroying lives and communities!!

Jacinta Ferris