

Public submission

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NSW Forestry Submission

Thankyou for the opportunity to add my views on the long term outcomes of sustainable forestry in NSW and by default Australia. Not that I think the general publics views on what is in the best interests of ALL Australians, will have any influence on the political decisions made.

Rather than just put in the usual copy and paste answers provided by industry, which are all factual, and all legitimate, sadly the voice of industry is noted but has no impact on the long term decisions regarding forestry in Australia.

I have been involved in the Timber Industry for more than 40 years, mainly in selling roles, in my own business and National specialist wholesalers of domestic and imported hardwoods.

All of us in the industry, understand that there is no way to have a forest logged nicely. Trees have to be cut down and dragged and roaded and has a short term impact on the environment.

However a managed forest, which is both state and private forest, is a rare resource, which under current forestry management is sustainable and renewable. This means that the forest area being logged at any one time is comparatively small and after a few years the overall impact is negligible.

A Timber resource which has comparative low energy inputs in sourcing production and manufacture, compared to other alternatives.

In our industry we have alternatives to timber ...

Steel and aluminium which have their unique applications, but the feedstock comes out of the ground miles away from the unsightly damage to the physical environment, and both have enormous energy input in manufacture and in recycling

Plastic and now fibre plastic alternatives which are promoted as better products as they are recycledfrom fossil fuel feedstock, and again enormous carbon/energy waste.

Whether you agree with wind turbines or not, they are being built. They are being built on land which is usually at the top of hill sides, where the forest is being cleared, enormous amounts of concrete and steel is being used, and many of the blades are being made from composite materials as well as a balsa timber sourced from Central America. However is has been reported that about 10% of the supply has come from certified sources, about 90% is not!

By NOT accessing and using our sustainable managed forests, we import huge volumes of imported decking and structural hardwoods and softwoods. We salve our conscience for a few to save our trees and environment, but happy to import and use “certified” hardwood decking and framing from our Northern neighbours. Its OK if they want to destroy their resource as long as we don’t destroy ours!

The Timber Industry overall are treated as pariahs by society, and has not been able to raise an effective and meaningful narrative for the benefits of sustainable managed forest resource. WA, Vic have already locked up native forest logging. Tasmania has been restricted as has NSW and QLD. The continual reduction in accessible forest resource and turning in to in some cases national parks is the incorrect way to proceed.

In the 80/90s Forest MIS (managed Investment schemes) were promoted so that investors could invest in schemes and receive a tax break. In theory this was and still is a great idea, however it inevitably was hijacked by accountants and merchant bankers and the whole benefit of the managed resource was hijacked.

Conversely, the US did this in a similar form in their Forestry act of 1927, and the hardwood resource (mainly their East Coast Appalachian) in the US is a large and very important World wide timber resource which is now a huge timber supply industry , as well as a far bigger resource than what was available 100 years ago. Long term, political, environmental and social benefits.

Why would any long term existing company, or interested concern have any interest or confidence in investing in our industry?

What should be a vibrant, highly regarded industry on all levels is being slowly suffocated by reduced access, and a political and environmental wedge.

So, my submission would be to focus and develop the existing forest resource to enhance our own environmental and social benefits.

We should look at :

The positives:

Don't keep cutting back areas to access logging both private and public resources.

Encourage investment in private and public plantations in a way which encourages long term, sustainably managed, continually increasing resource. Workers from all walks of life and institutions could benefit from planting and managing an increased timber resource – as well as having a much better plan for fire control than we have now.

Allow Forestry to explain, educate and practice what they are doing

Don't make National parks areas of locked gates and preservation. Fund them for better access and management . I am not talking about logging NP, but to ensure that they are live and active (what was wrong with cattle leases?)

So rather than this latest submission be wasted for more rules and regulations why don't we look for the massive opportunity we have for all Australians, to have an increasing forestry resource, sustainably managed and supported by MOST Australians for the benefit of ALL Australians.

Thankyou

Matt Lee

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