

Public submission

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Grant's Sawmilling Company – [REDACTED] - Western NSW

Grant's Sawmilling Company operates timber businesses in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. We run fully integrated operations covering all aspects of harvesting, haulage, milling, kiln drying, finger jointing and glue laminating.

We market our products all over Australia and have exported 350 containers of products to markets in Japan, China and the USA.

100% of all products harvested is utilised for the production of timber products, garden products, biomass fuel and firewood. We also work with Forest Corporation in silviculture operations in the forest.

Grant's Sawmilling Company currently employ 65 fulltime staff and with support from government, this number could increase to 100 plus. In addition, we have a number of contractors providing services to our company.

At current staff numbers, that is 65, we employ 1.2% of the population of our towns. Applying the same calculation to Sydney, this would be equivalent to 60,000 jobs.

Our industry provides diversification in our local economy, which is primarily agriculturally based. This is particularly important during periods of drought where our economies can struggle.

As members of our local community, we are very active in supporting many of our local sporting clubs, schools and charitable organisations.

Having had the opportunity to tour our forests with many senior Forestry Corporation Foresters, and successive Chief Scientists of NSW, I believe we have world's best practice in forest management. To an outsider, harvesting can appear to be very disruptive, but it must be remembered that harvesting is science based and in the longer term, results in a better bush.

Our forests create much more than just timber products. Forests protect flora and fauna by continuing to provide habitat as more and more pressure is put on the landscape for other purposes, such as housing, roads, electrical infrastructure, agriculture, mining, etc.

Forest management is very aware of the need to protect areas of Aboriginal heritage value, for current and future generations to value.

Australian native timbers provide great answers to the growing awareness and need for natural building solutions. I don't think anyone can argue against timber as our most environmentally friendly building material.

While plantation softwood is suited to many applications, our native timbers have properties which fill many special needs, for example; Australian Cypress has a natural resistance to termite attacks, rot and decay. This makes it very suited to areas requiring external durability without the need for chemical treatment, for example; children's playground equipment or anywhere in the food chain.

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We will always need softwood plantations, the further development of native plantations and private native forestry. This alone, however, cannot supply all our needs, and we will always need our native forests as well to ensure our future supply of our most environmentally friendly building material.

Support of our local industry will also allow us to reduce our demand for imported materials, some of which we cannot be sure of their environmental credentials. This also grows Australian industry jobs and helps to secure our future.

An active growing forest can provide many positive outcomes, including:

- Sequestering carbon
- Filtering water
- Providing habitat for flora and fauna
- Timber production

Climate change is often cited as the reason for wildfires that do so much damage to forested areas.

If you read the journals of the early explorers and sea captains, you will find many references to smoke in the distance. Some of this would have been naturally occurring fires, but most would have been from Aboriginal burning. The burning over thousands of years resulted, as reported by the early explorers and sea captains, in grasslands with scattered, large trees. This environment, created mainly by Aboriginal burning practices, was able to handle regular, low intensity fires, as were the animals.

Today, after 200 plus years of Europeans changing the Aboriginal burning practices, we have a very different landscape where the growth in many areas becomes far too dense. This means that when we do get a fire, it results in devastation for the forested lands and the animals that live within it.

In order to protect our forested lands and the animals that live within them, we must manage them. We must learn from the Aboriginal practices of the past and realise that 'locking up' the land without proper, active management, will result in wildfires and nothing will survive, including our beloved koalas.