

**Submission  
No 97**

## **SUSTAINABILITY OF ENERGY SUPPLY AND RESOURCES IN NSW**

**Name:** Mr Scott Sledge

**Date Received:** 10 September 2019

2019 submission: **inquiry into the sustainability of energy supply and resources in NSW**

*The terms of Reference for the Inquiry are: That the Committee on Environment and Planning inquire into and report on the sustainability of energy supply and resources in NSW, including:*

1. *The capacity and economic opportunities of renewable energy.*
2. *Emerging trends in energy supply and exports, including investment and other financial arrangements.*
3. *The status of and forecasts for energy and resource markets.*
4. *Effects on regional communities, water security, the environment and public health.*
5. *Opportunities to support sustainable economic development in regional and other communities likely to be affected by changing energy and resource markets, including the role of government policies.*
6. *Any other related matters.*

To :*The Environment and Planning Committee of the NSW parliament*

**About burning wood for electricity**

Thank you for allowing me to submit comments on the above matters. I will be brief.

**My name is Scott Sledge and I have been active in the forestry/ EPA/ DPI “consultations” in the Northern Rivers of NSW during the past 2 years. As President of both the Northern Rivers Guardians {NRG} and the Nimbin Environment Centre {NEC} I represent these groups with umbrella organisations such as the Nature Conservation Council and the North East Forest Alliance {NEFA.}**

**Recently I was part of a delegation talking to reps from the cogeneration plants at Condong and Broadwater which go by the name of Cape Byron Power Company {CBP} (I can see no connection to that tourist icon, as their head office is in Queensland and parent company is Quinbrook investments of UK.)**

**Although CBP is operating entirely within the law as far as I can see, the laws need to change as burning anything is harmful to our fragile atmosphere, especially wood “waste” – which emits more CO2 than coal. The carbon dioxide emissions from these facilities are not counted toward any national targets or limits, because ‘biomass’ is considered to be carbon neutral. These facilities get Renewable Energy Credits for the wood that they burn.**

**Fossil fuel is more polluting as a system than we can afford with the Climate emergency ramping up all around the globe.**

In March 2019 a case was brought in the European Court to remove biomass burning from the list of methods considered to be “renewable energy.”

{ <http://eubiomasscase.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/EU-Biomass-Case-Main->

[Arguments.pdf](#). = arguments for the suit filed against the EU on its treatment of biomass energy as carbon neutral. }

Australia needs to get ahead when it comes to renewable energy and not blindly follow the outdated Kyoto Protocol. There are many technologies which can help to:

1. Reduce the demand for greater amounts of electricity. My household has run entirely on PV solar since construction in 1988., and:
2. Reduce the emissions which are already damaging our environment and lifestyles. I can't even bear to think about the many species facing extinction.

We need to put development of clean, truly green technologies (what about wave energy, and hydrogen as fuel?) and systems as our top priority. Or will we keep fiddling - fiddling while the world burns? More than 800 climate scientists and ecologists have written to various international agencies, stating that the burning of woody biomass should be counted towards our emissions, because the lag time in the landscape in re-capturing the carbon can be decades (in the case of the north coast plantations, they are being converted to pasture so the carbon will never be recaptured).

PS Stop the wanton destruction of the world's forests : our best carbon sinks. Allowing existing trees to continue growing and sequestering carbon is essential. This simple concept is explained in a peer-reviewed paper published by the journal "[Frontiers in Forests](#)," authored by Drs. William R. Moomaw, Susan A. Masino and Edward K. Faison. The paper's title says it all: "Proforestation Mitigates Climate Change and Serves the Greatest Good."

### **WOODSUPPLY AGREEMENTS (WSAs)**

Back in 1998 the NSW Government gave guaranteed volumes of sawlogs from public forests to select private sawmillers for twenty years in Wood Supply Agreements (WSAs) for free. The Forestry Corporation estimates of available yields were soon found to be grossly over-stated. In 2003 the annual commitments were reduced, but the WSAs were extended for 5 more years at levels that were clearly unsustainable. The new commitments simply did not exist. Since then BORAL have repeatedly taken the Forestry Corporation to court for compensation for their failure to supply commitments every year after 2004, until in 2014 the Government paid BORAL \$8.55 million to buy back some of their WSA. But they extended their contract for a further 5 years to 2028, giving them commitments for more timber than they bought back. So far it has cost taxpayers over \$13 million to buy back non-existent timber given to sawmillers for free.

Direct Action to protect native forests from logging is likely very soon. The NSW government should take responsibility to protect our common wealth, but instead presides over a system of self-management for the logging industry.

Once the failed plantations have all been burned there will be pressure from the company to get access to trees from State Forests.

The Department of Primary Industry has already identified hundreds of thousands of tonnes of wood/annum that could come from private and State Forests for burning.