

**Submission  
No 46**

**INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LAND IN  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** Gulpa Sawmill  
**Name:** Mr Ian Danckert  
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## General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5

My name is Ian Danckert I am 58 years old. I have been in the forest ever since I was 13 and started working at Gulpa Sawmill in 1970 with my father Allan Barker and Uncle Colin Barker. My grandfather bought a sawmill in 1938 in the township of Yalama, approximately 25km from Deniliquin towards Mathoura. He passed it on to his two sons, Colin Barker and Alan Barker. I since bought out my uncle Colin and then bought out my father Alan Barker and continued to run the company.

I've seen many changes in that time; none more horrific than the changing of the state forests to national parks. The old mill site was just off the edge of the Gulpa forest approx. ½ to 1 kilometre from Barker's Bridge which crosses the Gulpa Creek. My father used to tell me that when they worked on this old mill site, before it was burnt down in 1960 that the bullock teams would come across the Gulpa Creek. From the mill site you could see the bullock teams, laden with logs coming and they would then put the kettle on for the bullock teamsters and have a cup of tea ready for them by the time they got there. And by the time the kettle had boiled the bullock teams were at the site of the old sawmill.

This is only one story of many of how fast the timber grows in the forest. I can back it up because I have logged this area, in particular from where you can see the old mill site to the Gulpa creek. Approximately 20 years ago we took a substantial amount of trees out of that area and since then it's grown up to be so thick that you can't see the bridge anymore. Many stories of how they used to camp along the edge of the Gulpa creek near the bridge, but now you can't get near these sites because of trees being so big. I do have old photographs of the old mill site and I do have old photographs showing how trees were sparse,

apart in that time. And to see it now being neglected and mismanaged is a real heartbreaker for me.

Now whether we have to have a national park or change it back to a state forest is irrelevant. The fact remains is that it's not being cared for and in the 2 years that I have been out of it, it has grown unmaintained and totally neglected. The forest needs to be protected but having it as a national park is in my opinion not the correct way to do it. 'One coat' doesn't fit all national parks and this forest needs to be protected in some way shape or form to maintain its character, its accessibility, and to keep out foreign vermin. I believe that it should have a ring effect either by using roads, rivers or creeks as divisions or perimeters; have it so that if a fire does start it can be protected. Now this means that maybe that the outside ring has to be logged or utilised. The second ring, as it gets closer to another area needs to be thinned and firewood taken out of it. And then maybe the third ring can be used as a park that doesn't get touched. With the existing roads there it will be easy to create some sort of strategic protection for this forest.

I believe in David Joss' theory that the forest was made my man and by man I mean white settlers, with cattle being grazed in it. Forest land use should be able to be used by all, to be able to shoot vermin or trap and it should also be for fisherman so they can access the rivers from everywhere not just be restricted to that one spot that National Parks determines.

I also believe that you can't keep your grandfathers and kill your children and that applies to the timber. You can't keep old rotten timber or logs or trees that are dying anyway and chop out young trees and saplings. There should be a process of dying in the sense that both the old trees need to be taken out and the young trees allowed to grow. It is a natural progression. Trees are a renewable resource. You take gold out of the ground. You take coal out of the ground. You take diamonds or any other minerals and they can't be replaced. Redgum trees are replaced; they are a natural replacing species. Forests should be a living working breathing forest that can be maintained as an income for the state and not a burden on the taxpayers.

I believe that the motivation for political interference in this whole decision was chiefly for political gain, to maintain the labour government's office in power. When Minister Frank Sartor was at my sawmill 2 or 3 years ago he said to me, "I've got Garrett breathing down my neck. I've got the Greens and we haven't got enough political % to maintain office unless we go with the Greens". In my opinion that is not how a decision should be made. I asked the question, "Can we afford to lock up this forest and let it die? Do we need to lock it up and can we find a way to protect the growth of the trees and the animals that live in it?" I think we can and there's an easy way of doing it. Talking to people with knowledge of the local area and with local people and using common sense would be a great start. Local people need and love the area. Unlike the professor with letters after his name, who claims it's never going to flood again.

Ian Danckert