

**Submission
No 250**

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

Name: Mr Benjamin Danckert

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1st August 2012

My name is Ben Danckert, I'm a fourth Generation Saw miller. My family has milled redgum from the local forests for more than 70 years and I'm extremely proud of that. The decision that was made to turn the local forests into national parks was devastating to our business and our family. Before this decision was made we were to be told by members of State Forest NSW to invest in value adding or risk losing our quota.

We invested close to three million dollars on buying the property next door to the Sawmill, boiler, kiln, six sided planer, docking systems, forklifts, offices, etc. Basically everything for another whole business which would compliment Gulpa Sawmill. We were given the confidence of State Forests NSW that we were harvesting sustainably (which we were). Then came the NRC with its flawed science and political agenda. All this plant and equipment is still set up and ready to go if given the opportunity.

There were 26 staff employed at the time the decision was made. To see the look on everyone's face was really tough for our whole family. At least 3 of our staff had been employed for more than 26 years each.

The outcomes of the key recommendations were nonsense. We could see that a mile away. Staff that had retired at the mill who used to haul logs for my grandfather when he was still alive told stories of looking through the forest and waiting at certain spots for my grand father to take him in. "You could see all the way to the sand hill" he would say.

ONE DAY ABOUT 30 YRS AGO Geof RENTAL
& MYSELF KEN SWAFFER WERE HEADING
INTO "GULPA STATE FOREST" TO LOAD LOGS FOR
GULPA SAWMILL. AS WE CROSSED BARKERS
BRIDGE, (THE ACCESS TO GULPA) WE SAW
ALLAN & COLIN BARKER (THE MILL OWNERS)
ON THE ROAD. THEY STOPPED US AND
TOLD US TO GET OUT OF THE TRUCKS & ASKED
IF WE COULD SEE THE SANDHILLS (WHICH ARE
ABOUT 3KMS FROM THERE) WE SAID NO.
THEY THEN SAID THEIR FATHER HAD TOLD
THEM MANY YEARS AGO THEY COULD BE
SEEN BUT SINCE LOGGING STARTED
THE REGROWTH HAD HIDDEN THEM

KEN SWAFFER
EX LOG HAULER FOR "GULPA SAWMILL"

Currently at the mill I employ seven staff. My father and I, one admin and four labourers. With more resource I have the potential of employing at least 19 more immediately at the sawmill and ten more in the drying mill. What sort of business can say that? Not many. We still have the ability to get going again given access to sustainably harvest the forest again like my father, his father and his father.

How can someone say that the red gums were threatened and go against four generations of knowledge in the bush. It just didn't make any sense.

Benjamin Danckert