

**Submission  
No 381**

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

**Organisation:** Koppers Wood Products Australia

**Name:** Mr Murray Wood

**Date received:** 31/08/2012

---



**Koppers Wood Products Pty. Limited**

ABN 81 003 947 680

PO Box 335, GRAFTON 2460

Tel (02) 6641 2000

Fax (02) 6641 2099

[www.koppers.com.au](http://www.koppers.com.au)

The Director General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5

31 Aug 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: **Inquiry into the Management of Public Land in NSW**

**About Koppers Wood Products Pty Ltd**

The core business of Koppers Wood Products (KWP) is the production of preservative treated and manufactured poles and timbers. The availability of timber resource and a procurement strategy is critical to achieving the company's overall strategic objectives and goals.

KWP has three pole plants located on the east coast at Grafton (NSW), Takura (Qld) and Longford (Tas). A fourth pole plant at Bunbury WA provides timber treatment services only. The pole plants supply treated poles primarily to Utilities for critical infrastructure in Australia and nearby countries. KWP is a long term core supplier of quality treated wooden poles procured from sustainably managed safe forest operations on both State and private land.

Koppers Grafton Pole facility is the largest hardwood pole manufacturing site in the Southern Hemisphere. The site has maintained this position for over 50 years and supplies critical infrastructure products (utility poles, bridge piles and foundation piling ) into all NSW Utilities, main roads and railways. The Grafton site exports to the Asia Pacific markets and all other States of Australia. The importance of these products to the Government sector are sometimes missed in surveys and enquiries. We look forward to opportunity of presenting our case to the hearings later.

Koppers therefore has a great interest in the Management of Public Lands on the North Coast of NSW. In particular Koppers is concerned with the long term sustainable supply of hardwood poles from the public forest estate under the control of Forests NSW. The maintenance of forest areas that are conducive to producing high value wood products such as poles and piles is the primary aim of Koppers submission.

Koppers would like to put forward some points as follows.

1. **Reduction in Production Area** The removal of more land from FNSW harvest areas will mean that the balance of the forest will have to be harvested more intensely to meet current industry contracts. If allocations cannot be supplied, some form of compensation will need to be made. This then follows that an economic and social benefit will be reduced as business will adjust and become smaller to match the resource available.
2. **Process of Conversion** In the past areas of forest have been converted into reserves with very little thought about the impacts on the health, productivity and sustainability of the remaining forest. Forests of low environmental significance that have been harvested for many years were placed in reserves and other areas of relatively high environmental significance and low productivity left in State Forests. This has led to a patchwork of Reserves, Private Property and State forests. Local economic and social impacts have carried little weight in determinations. Many smaller country towns have lost their primary income stream, critical infrastructure such as schools and shops and slowly degenerated. Past conversions seem to be based on cherry picking local iconic

areas and focusing on arbitrary total hectares preserved instead of overall environmental and socio-economic impacts. It is possible to have a balance that meets both objectives

3. **Post Conversion Management** Changing Management from Private Property and State Forest to Reserves brings with it a change of management activities. Less activity means less people on the ground in an employed and productive capacity. Areas that were previously grazed with increased fertility accumulate higher fuel loads quicker. Because of the cost of maintaining reserves being borne now by Governments management becomes more passive. When funding is tight large areas often have effectively no forest management at all. This leads to dangerous outcomes such as catastrophic fires that not only destroy environmental values but potentially very valuable timber. A clear 'lose – lose' position.
4. **Access and Fire** The cost of keeping open roads is high so when areas are placed in reserves roading networks are reduced, downgraded and often closed. This leads to restricted public and emergency service access, preventing bushwalking any distance and fire fighting vehicles. This coupled with less frequent fire control regimes by Government agencies means that fires are more extreme when they do occur. The many differing fire fighting agencies also create friction and misunderstandings and reserves are usually left to burn to large containment lines unless lives and houses are threatened. State Forest has plantation and native forest health in their priorities and RFS consider mainly people and homes.
5. **Feral Animals and Weeds.** The restricted access into reserves also means that feral animals and weeds are difficult to control and now many farmers that are adjacent to reserves have increased costs controlling weeds and feral animal pests with no compensation from the Crown. Control measures on private land are irrelevant as feral animals and weeds invade from reserved areas. Control of weeds on crown lands is not mandated as on private property so there is less incentive to control.
6. **Multiuse** The change of land into conservation reserves restricts the public from many previous activities including horse riding, vehicle access, hunting feral animals, bushwalking and pet exercise. The reserves are then used by a smaller number of people. Maintain the public estate for multi use productive and safe areas for the public as well as maintaining the environmental values.

Koppers also supports the submission from the Forests Products Association.

*Regards*

*Murray Wood*

Procurement Forester KWP

U

**Enduring Wood - Naturally Better**