

**Submission
No 414**

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

Organisation: Patten & O'Neill Sawmills

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Date received: 31/08/2012

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FORMAL SUBMISSION INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LAND IN NSW.

THIS SUBMISSION IS ADDRESSED TO THE GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO.5

Our submission details information about the Redgum Forests, in particular, in Southern NSW. We live in Barham in Southern NSW. This small town is surrounded by Mathoura, Wakool, Moama and Deniliquin. These five towns have been very badly affected by the introduction of a National Park in the Weiri, Moria, Gulpa Island and Millewa Forests.

The decision to close these forests has had a huge impact on the surrounding towns. The stopping of work in these working forests meant that the jobs and employment have stopped, lively hoods have been totally destroyed, confidence is down, closure of businesses such as shops, small businesses and car yards, and it hasn't stopped there, it still continues. It has had a land slide affect moving thru communities, making families move to seek alternative employment especially when they haven't wanted to uproot their lives and that of their families.

We are 4th generation sleeper cutters and 2nd generation firewood cutters and we have seen many changes in this time, nothing more devastating than the changing of the State Forests to National Parks. The Redgum Timber Industry was a very viable industry, but more importantly a hugely sustainably productive industry. This very valuable industry was capable of earning up to 80 million dollars per year.

The fact remains the forest is not being cared for. In the two years that the forest has been locked up, it has been allowed to grow unmaintained and neglected. The forest vegetation used to be kept down by cattle grazing but not now, it is just fuel for fire on the forests floor. The last fire in the Moira Forest was before it became a National Park, we helped fight that fire, it was tough enough then, even with the forest being grazed, logged and access roads maintained, so we can only imagine what it would be like now if ever a fire got started, with the roads being so over grown access would be non-existent. There used to be forest machinery in the forest working, so if a fire started it would be soon under control, but not now. Roadways in the forest have been let go which means less access for firefighting equipment such as trucks, bulldozers, skidders and whatever else is needed at the time to fight and control fire. Not to mention the potential loss of life from campers becoming trapped or volunteer fire fighters having minimal access and escape routes. Tourism is one of the only industries alive and well in the Barham, and with one of the biggest draw cards being our forest camping grounds, this industry is under threat.

Considering the potential hazards to our forest and lives it is clear that the 'thinnings' process would be high beneficial. It would stop the overcrowding of trees and the disturbance of the undergrowth by the use of forest machinery would give seeds the chance to regenerate, and so the cycle of growth can continues. It is a natural progression. Trees are a renewable resource if managed correctly.

Due to making Yanga into National Park which means no forest management i.e. logging, road maintenance and no grazing. In 2010 Yanga was meant to get an environmental flow to water the forest and fill lagoon's for frog's, bird life etc., this didn't work, instead flooded neighbouring properties because of lack of grazing and control burning in low lying areas, which caused prolific growth of cerbungy in the creek beds, the water couldn't flow into the creeks of the Murrumbidgee into Yanga to fill wetlands for wild life which is what a National Park is meant to be about. And You Call this management of a National Park, COME ON!!!!!!

We as a business were forced to take an exit package because of the small parcel of timber offered to us, it just wouldn't have been viable to remain logging.

We then put all our exit money and some of our own into funds, equipment to be the principle contractor for the licensee's that stayed in. If the decision was turned around we could be working in these sustainable forest's in Moria / Milawa Group when the Koondrook / Perricoota / Campbell's Island forest was flooded, like it is known. The government have just spent in excess of 68 million dollars under the Koondrook Perricoota forest enhancement project to control flood the forest based on the recommendations of the so called professional namely PETER KANOWSKI who " doubted the forest floors would not flood nationally again".

Tax payers and your government have had to fund this laughable project, a project that has been postponed due to national flooding; the monies spent on this could easily be recovered by royalties paid to Forest NSW if this discussion was reversed. I recommend this be seriously considered for the long term benefit of communities and government.

Should you require any other input into this matter, we would be more than happy to be contacted.

Regards,

Redgum Fallers Pty Ltd

Trading as

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