

**Submission
No 4**

**INQUIRY INTO LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND
FUTURE OF THE TIMBER AND FOREST PRODUCTS
INDUSTRY**

Organisation: Responsible Wood

Date Received: 29 April 2021

6th April 2021

The Hon. Mark Banasiak
Member Legislative Council
Chair-Portfolio Committee No. 4 Industry
BY EMAIL

**Enabling
Sustainability**

Dear Mr. Banasiak,

**Re: Submission for the enquiry- “Long Term Sustainability
and future of the Timber and Forest Products Industry”**

I thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

By way of background, Responsible Wood (formerly Australian Forestry Standard Limited) is an accredited Standards Development organisation, licensed by Standards Australia to develop Australian Standards.

We are responsible for two Australian Standards:

- AS 4708-Sustainable Forest Management and;
- AS 4707-chain of Custody for Forest Products.

These Standards underpin the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme (RWCS).

Under the RWCS, approximately 16 million hectares of Australia’s public and private forestry estate is certified as being sustainably managed. This represents over 92% of the commercial forestry estate in Australia.

I would like to make a submission for Items (e) and (f) of your terms of reference as follows.

Item (e)-Opportunities for the timber and forest products industry.

Certification of private native forestry

There is no doubt that in future years, the importance of private native as a source of wood supply will increase. Currently, there is no (or minimal area) private native forest certified as being sustainably managed in NSW. Certification is becoming critical for market access and the lack of certification will certainly impede future opportunities for the NSW forest products sector. A recent example is the Bunnings “Responsible Timber Sourcing Policy” that excludes non-certified materials from this very important supply chain.

It is understood that the Bunnings policy is already significantly impacting several NSW suppliers.

To facilitate market access for forest materials originating from private native forests it is requested that the Committee consider the following.

1. Continue to provide support for the NSW Local Land Services to establish cost effective systems for the certification of private native forests.

Work is now being undertaken by LLS, but on-going financial support to LLS and a strong policy commitment to use certification as a means to demonstrate sustainable and responsible management of private native forests is necessary to bring the certification of private native forestry into a reality.

2. Support packages for the certification of private native forestry. To show case the economic and technical viability of certification for private native forestry it may be necessary to fund pilot projects. These could include pilot projects for “group certification” where private native forest growers collaborate to effectively operate a group forest management program that collectively offsets certification costs, making certification economically and technically achievable for small land holders.

A funding package and incentives to establish a pilot program would facilitate the establishment of groups and allow the cost of certification to be spread over many participants reducing certification costs for individual landowners and providing cost effective certification opportunities.

Item (f)-The role of Government to encourage improvements in forest practices and training.

Private native forest growers are typically focused on agricultural production with income from forestry a secondary or periodic revenue source. Typically, silvicultural improvements of the forest resource such as managing stocking rates, thinning or pruning are rarely undertaken, or are poorly understood.

There is significant opportunity to increase both the quantity and quality of forest products originating from private native forests through improved education and training.

Recent research indicates that the opportunities in this area have potential to increase resource availability several fold. A small investment in education has potential to deliver sizeable economic benefits.

It is requested that the Committee review what training on silvicultural practices is available to private native forest growers, what training is required to improve current practices and how such training could be delivered.

Finally, I thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and I would be delighted to answer any further questions.

Yours faithfully,

Simon Dorries
Chief Executive Officer