

**Submission
No 116**

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

Organisation: Signature Oysters and Oyster Life

Date Received: 26 May 2021

I hold approximately 5 ha of oyster leases on the Clyde River in Southern NSW. Oyster Life farm these leases on my behalf. The business employs 15 people in harvesting oysters, marketing them and also in developing a software farm management programme -Smart Oysters. The revenue from oysters alone (not including the software business) will be \$1 million this financial year. Much of the catchment of the Clyde River is heavily forested and significant areas of the catchment surrounding our oyster leases are part of Mogo State Forest and Benandarah State Forest. In the aftermath of the 2019-2020 fires, destabilised soils from forests and river banks, devoid of vegetation, washed into the Clyde River and made oyster harvest impossible. Significant remediation work has been done to stabilise the soils since then but this has been regularly hampered by the torrential rain events that have occurred since the fires. In addition to this, an event which forest ecologists have never seen, occurred in the fires. The mangroves along the rivers which clean and filter the water burnt. It is now 15 months since the fires and the mangroves show no sign of life.

The oyster industry provides far more revenue to the economy of this region than the native forest harvesting industry, yet its future is precarious if logging continues. Logging destabilises the soils and the runoff to the Clyde River threatens an industry far more valuable to the Eurobodalla than forestry. Climate change - through fire and flood are a significant threat to the industry, but forestry exacerbates this risk and yet it delivers little in terms of revenue or employment to the region.

Attached are photos of our oyster leases and the burnt forest and dead mangroves in the background.