

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

**Organisation:** Clyde River Blueberry Farm

**Date Received:** 28 May 2021

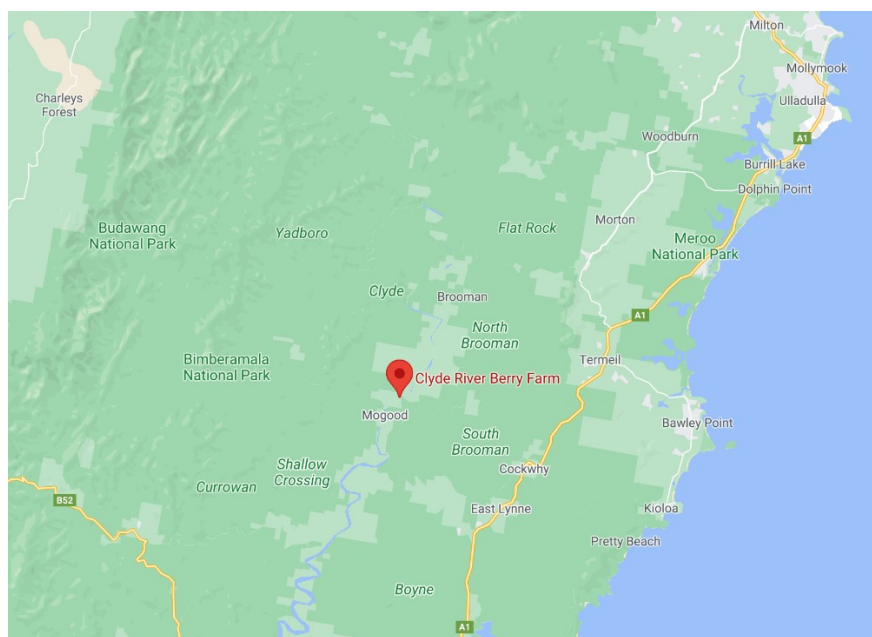
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# NSW Parliamentary Inquiry: Long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry.

Written by Takesa Frank (May 2021)

## Background Information

I am writing this submission on behalf of the Clyde River Blueberry Farm as an employee that has worked there for 6 years and has witnessed the recent effects of logging on local tourism and business. The Clyde River Blueberry Farm is located in Brooman, New South Wales (NSW) which is about an hour drive south and inland from both Ulladulla and Batemans Bay (refer to figure 1). The farm has been operating as an agritourism business for 33 years with people travelling extensively to the area to pick blueberries, eat fresh homemade ice cream and enjoy the wonderful natural environment including swimming in the Clyde River.



*Figure 1: A map outlining the location of the Clyde River Blueberry Farm (Google, 2021)*

In 2019/20, the Clyde River Blueberry farm was badly affected by the Black Summer bushfires resulting in an 80% loss of income for the season. The following year both logging operations in the Brooman State Forest and Covid 19 restricted tourism operations resulting in a further financial loss.

For the South Coast of NSW the Forest Sector Employment Dependence (FSED) fell from 0.8% to 0.6% from 2011 through to 2016. (The FSED is the percentage of the total workforce directly employed in the forest sector). By comparison, tourism brought \$2.6 billion into the South Coast economy in the year ending 2020, with 10.7million visitors – this, in spite of the horrific bushfire season (Destination NSW, 2020). 6.7% of the south coast workforce is employed in tourism.

### The effects of logging in Brooman State Forest and on local business

Logging increases bushfire threat. The residents of the area survived a horrific bushfire season, suffering damage to our properties, some losing everything, and many fighting the fires with limited resources for a week. We know that logging increases the bushfire threat, (how put a reference in)and one side of our main access road is already littered with logging slash (refer to figure 2). Not only does the destruction of logging itself cause anxiety, but this anxiety is exacerbated by the knowledge that we are being set up for more fires in the future by ongoing forestry harvesting operations. This fear is compounded by the overwhelming evidence that the type of forest ‘management’ Forestry NSW undertakes also contributes to climate change – further increasing our risk of more fires and threatening agricultural prospects in the area. Through hard concerted effort of local residents, we were able to limit the fire damage to the farms orchard but given the increasing propensity for fires in the forest it would be unlikely the

orchard would survive similar fire activity. Without the blueberry orchard and infrastructure we lose the entire business.



*Figure 2: A photograph of logging slash on the local access road, 'The Sheep Track'. This slash goes for eight kilometres (Photograph by Takesa Frank)*

An issue that is affecting local residents and tourists attracted to the area are the logging trucks. The roads are not wide enough to fit both a car and logging truck and often the trucks will be travelling at high speeds (refer to figure 3). Accidents have already happened on our roads with residents colliding with or being run off the road by fast-moving fully laden logging trucks. In the peak summer period, in a forest that boasts an enormous “Visit NSW Forests” sign on Boardinghouse Road intersection with the Princess Highway further accidents and harm to residents and visitors is inevitable.



*Figure 3: Logging truck on local road taking up most of the space forcing local resident to move off the road completely (photograph by Brian Bennet)*

The Clyde River Blueberry Farm is not the only business that is seeing the impacts of the logging. Jim Surry the owner of Shallow Crossing Campground stated in an interview:

*‘The logging occurring is going to have an impact on our local business if road works/ closures are in place. The campers visiting the area have all mentioned the destruction they have seen on the way out to my local business. This could stop people from visiting my business, which would cause us huge problems.’*

After COVID, more Australians are holidaying closer to home. Tourism is expected to increase in the South Coast over the summer. Local businesses are poised to recoup some of the losses from the previous fire season and COVID-19. But who will want to come to visit a devastated forest? Because the jobs of a few interstate contractors were protected over countless local jobs and the safety and sanity of the local community.

Suggestions for what a sustainable future for this industry should look like

**Our public forests should be managed for their ecological, recreational and carbon value**

- creating more local jobs, allowing our forests to recover and to be part of our climate solution.

Currently the primary purpose of our public native forests is their timber resources. This provides little economic value to our region and has profound ecological impacts. The primary purpose of the management of State Forests should move away from access to timber resources and towards their management as ecological, recreational and cultural reserves.

**The South Coast could be a case study in the modern management of forests that create jobs while supporting biodiversity and recreation.** Our public native forests could be an epicentre for world class nature-based recreation including bushwalking, mountain biking, horse riding, kayaking, camping etc. The South Brooman and neighbouring State Forests have the tallest Spotted Gum in the world and 47 kilometres of Clyde River frontage as well as amazing views of the Budawangs and South Coast Coastline. Marrying up these recreational facilities with appropriate commercial development in public forests including eco-accommodation and other services could provide the economic basis to fund the ongoing management of the forests.

**Public native forests can make a substantial contribution to reaching net zero emissions by 2050 if they are allowed to mature.** Carbon research shows it is best to source wood from plantations (Keith et al 2014). Develop new industries for this – carbon storage in native forests – with the opportunity to earn 4 times the value of woodchips. In Tasmania, the carbon storage value of public forests has provided a significant contribution to that state reaching net zero emissions in 2015. Allowing currently logged public native forests to mature will provide some



of the lowest cost carbon abatements, taking pressure off other sectors to deliver more difficult and expansive carbon emission abatement.

**New models of management are possible including direct involvement or control by Traditional Owners.** Public forests will require ongoing management including fire management, maintenance of infrastructure and improvements to support recreational activities and commercial access. These services should be able to be funded from profits derived from user costs. There is an opportunity to more actively engage the local community in the management of local forests, including the direct management and control of Traditional Owners.

## References

1. Google, (2021) 'The Clyde River Blueberry Farm',  
<<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Clyde+River+Berry+Farm/@-35.5048093,150.2131357,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x6b15b5dc5d67b8ef:0x6f748d0ebd717661!8m2!3d-35.5048093!4d150.2131357>>
2. Destination NSW 2020 – South Coast Visitor Profile Fact Sheet  
<https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/tourism/facts-and-figures/regional-tourism-statistics/south-coast-region>
3. Keith, H., Lindenmayer, D., Macintosh, A., & Mackey, B. (2015). Under what circumstances do wood products from native forests benefit climate change mitigation?. PloS one, 10(10), e0139640.