

**Submission  
No 159**

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

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I have been interested in trees (and their opposite: soil erosion) all my life.  
I have lived near the edge of the big tree forests of Gondwanaland World Heritage for forty years.

I see a clash of values.

On the long side, trees and forests are ecosystems, part of the biodiversity of the living layers of the planet, a highly evolved set of species or relationships, complex, fascinating, useful to all species as mutually supportive life maintaining systems. Ecosystems, of the Ecos. Not our household only.

In the short run, homo economicus, man and woman can't see the forests for the wood. The undoubted beauty, utility, convenience and amazing supply of wood for many uses including monetary profit. What a treasure we have found! Australia, the dry continent, blessed on the fringes with a small proportion of old forest and an even smaller proportion of large trees. Since we, European settlers, discovered these forests we have used them greedily, taken what we wanted, revisited them more frequently. Not much left, even by area.

The Forestry Commission was first established to control our predation and to make sure that forests and wood supply would be possible in perpetuity. But greed can overcome ideals, the trees on the trucks are getting smaller all the time, the industry has captured the managers. Now the Commission has become a corporation, committed by government to supplying more wood than the forests can grow.

I recommend that the business of timbergetting be confined to forests that have been planted, not stolen from the past and the future.

I recommend that the contract-committed volumes of timber supply be reduced to that which the plantation areas can supply now. Not tomorrow, not yesterday, but now.

Thank you for reading,  
Ian Dixon.