

**Submission
No 230**

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

Name: Mr Michael Kingwill

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I started my working life in 1981 as an apprentice Saw Doctor - Saw Maker at a pine mill at Tumut finishing my apprenticeship in early 1985. Since then, I have worked in the soft wood and hard wood industries as a saw doctor and hardwood sawmill owner-operator. I am also a Group Captain with the NSW Rural Fire Service and have been involved in numerous plantation fires over the years.

When I returned to the family farm at Adjungbilly, 60km north east of Tumut, the nearest pine plantation was some 20km from our property.

In 1984 NSW Forestry Commission purchased Redhill station which joins our farm on the southern boundary. It took some years to plant it all to pine but we now have a pine plantation next door.

In 1994 a private company (managed investment scheme) purchased Black Andrew station on our eastern boundary and planted most of it to pine.

In 1997 State Forests (NSW government) purchased Nanangroe station on our northern boundary and it too went into pine.

Black Andrew plantation was sold to Forest NSW in about 2000 as the managed investment scheme went broke.

We also join what was Bungongo Forest (native hard wood) on our south east corner which is now a nature reserve.

We have another block of land on Jeremiah road south east of our main property that joins another managed investment scheme of pine plantation that was established in 1979. Parts of this plantation have been sold, harvested and re-planted.

To summarise, our main property has some 38kms common boundary with Forest Corporation.

Our biggest problem in sharing this boundary is the weeds that grow and spread from Forest Corporation lands onto our property, which we are required to eradicate but they do not even effectively manage.

- 1) We spend in excess of \$50,000 dollars a year on, mainly, blackberry control. Birds, kangaroos and foxes eat the berries, move onto, or over, our land before passing the berry seeds. The berries grow from there. Pre-plantations, weed eradication took 1-2 weeks per year. It is now a 4-5 month concerted effort and we never complete the job.
- 2) Under the Afforestation Plantation ACT of 1988, both state and private forest growers do not have to control weeds on their land. They only have to spray 6 meters around the boundary.
- 3) Under the Local Government Act, landholders have to suppress blackBerry and other noxious weed on all their land. This is enforced by the local government biosecurity officer (weed inspector).
- 4) Plantation managers claim they cannot afford to control blackberry and other weeds in their plantations
- 5) This lack of weed control contributes greatly to the bush fire devastation caused in the plantations (e.g., Dunns road fire) making it impossible to control a fire.

- 6) When Forest Corp and private forest growers bought these properties, they had very little, if any, blackberry on them. Now there is an understorey of berries. Areas not planted to pine, such as gullies, water ways etc.,) are choked out with blackberry bushes, up to 2 metres high.
- 7) The water that a pine plantation uses is another significant issue that is not talked about. Local creeks have dried up when the plantations were established. Pine uses 36 inches (900mm) of rain a year. If that rainfall is not realised, there is no run-off into the waterways. This is called plantation interception.
- 8) Anecdotally, I am told that Forest Corp receive \$4.50 a ton for their pulp log. This is unviable and is subsidised by the taxpayer. Farming/ grazing is by far a more viable land use in terms of return on capital and job creation. Farmland should not be put into plantation forestry. Forest Corporation has land that has never been cleared for pine production that they now receive payments on for carbon credits. They are now asking for more farmland to grow pine on at a loss to the taxpayer detriment.
- 9) The pine plantations with which we share a boundary, will never return to the condition they were in prior to Forest Corporation management.

Before more productive land is given over to pine plantations, the issues of water interception, weed eradication and bushfire mitigation must be properly addressed.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission, and for your time.

Yours faithfully,

Michael KINGWILL