

Richard Reeg Submission to Inquiry for Logging and Grazing in our State Conservation Areas.

I'm opposed to industrial logging of our State Conservation Areas (SCAs) or National Parks or allowing destructive activities such as stock grazing.

Our reserve system is vital to maintaining our biodiversity. In your report it states that ecological thinning can improve the SCAs and grazing reduce fire risks.

The report really reads like the loggers want access to our reserve system because they've run out of wood everywhere else and this is a ploy to assist the loggers by sugar coating it as ecological thinning to improve environmental outcomes and grazing to reduce fire hazards.

The timber industry was paid out for these conservation areas as part of the process to protect these areas. I work in the solar industry and the State Government has pulled back from any assistance and we haven't received a payout for loss of jobs. The company I work for alone has lost 32 jobs because of the lack of will with this government to support solar and renewables. (except burning our forests which is crazy by the way.)

I study permaculture design and practice organic primary production as a side to my solar job. I have a 100 acre property next to a SCA. Both my property and the SCA have really good regrowth and rainforest species are starting to emerge as the forest regains its natural structure from years of land clearing and over logging. I have a conservation agreement for our property with the Nature Conservation Trust because of the high conservation value of the vegetation communities here. There is an area where the trees have grown thick from a previous fire. The ecological scientists told me that we do not need to thin the trees as the natural processes will take care of that and the ones that do not make it will supply nutrients to the soil.

In my studies of permaculture design and organic primary production I have learned that what you propose as ecological thinning and grazing to reduce fire hazards is flawed from all the reading I have done. These State Conservation Areas were set aside to improve conditions for our native animals and plants. What the NRC, state government and the loggers intend to do as outlined in the NRC report will harm these communities, not improve them.

- Industrial logging will destroy the soil structure leading to erosion.
- Removal of trees is removal of nutrients that should be going back in to the soil.
- Thinning should not be commercially viable since you'd want to take the weaker trees that would not be merchantable for the best ecological outcome.
- Threatened animals that are supposed to be protected in these SCAs will be killed during industrial logging activities.
- Grazing is the worst thing next to logging. The stock will destroy all native shrubs and grasses and leave weeds. Areas that are left alone and allowed to become climax forests are less prone to fire so what the NRC proposes with industrial logging and grazing will cause more fire risk.

In the NRC report, the people quoted seem to be from Forests NSW or with forestry backgrounds. Since I moved to this property I have read about a lot of problems with Forest NSW logging areas that are not supposed to be logged. I saw on the news a couple weeks ago about the EPA being investigated for not being able to enforce compliance of environmental laws. These are not the government agencies we want managing improvements to our protected State Conservation Areas.

Our State Conservation Areas were put in to place after much scientific review and consultation with all stakeholders. The timber industry took the handout by government to offset these areas being acquired for our reserve system.

Now the timber industry has logged everywhere else so much that hardly anything is left and they want to go for what is protected from logging. If the State Government can afford to buyout the timber industry then why can't it find funding to do proper environmental works in our SCAs like weed management or ecological thinning of the weaker trees but not with industrial logging? Grazing should be off limits no matter what. The SCAs are for our native animals and plants. I can't take my dogs in there and I'm in agreement with that as those areas are crucial to the survival of our native animals.

Even if you allow our State Conservation Areas to be converted back to operational and allowed to have industrial logging in them it will only prop up a dying industry for a few years. Just because our public lands have been mismanaged over the past decades doesn't give the timber industry the right to trash our SCAs. They've been paid out and should have used that money to find alternative jobs like so many in the solar sector have had to do. At least the timber companies were paid to do it.

I work in Lismore and there was a great thing that happened here. A company called Metgasco tried to force an industrial landscape of gas wells on us and the people said no through protests. I know these SCAs and a lot of our National Parks were designated with the help of protests. I feel if this government tries to start logging our SCAs and National Parks, you'll see a similar effort by communities to protect these areas from industrial logging under the guise of ecological thinning. Metgasco kept telling us the process was safe. People did their research and saw the truth and spoke out. The same goes with the NRC proposal to subject our hard won State Conservation Areas with industrial logging and allowing grazing. The timber companies were already paid out not to do that and everyone knows what stock does to the landscape and that it's not appropriate for our reserve system. You can try and sugar coat it but I'm not swallowing it and I don't think very many people will.

No logging should be allowed in our reserve system full stop! We need wilderness areas. It's even in all the permaculture design literature I read. Permaculture is one of Australia's best innovations and it would be good if our government scientists start implementing the best of that and research the best environmental outcomes around the world that doesn't involve industrial logging or grazing. It's not fair to cater to small interest groups like loggers and graziers and leave out solar and other environmentally friendly industries. Tourism is one of the biggest industries in NSW and the proposal of the NRC will have negative impacts on this industry.

Thanks for taking my objection to industrial logging of our reserve system or allowing stock to graze in them.

Regards,

Richard Reeg