

**From:** Ian Watkins [mailto:i.watkins@timbersystems.com.au]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 March 2010 5:33 PM  
**To:** Avtar Singh  
**Subject:** South Western Cypress Forests Assessment

To whom it may concern,

I am writing with regard to the South Western Cypress Forests Assessment and whilst I do not hold qualifications in areas of environment or economic impact I have been involved in the timber industry throughout Australia since 1978.

After growing up in the Albury/Wodonga region and working for a major family owned sawmill (now closed down), in Wodonga I am now based in Brisbane and our company, Advanced Timber Systems Pty Ltd actively supports the timber industry offering new & used processing equipment along with accessories, 24 hour service and operator training. In the 20 years that I have been servicing the Cypress industry in NSW I have seen our customer base dwindle from more than 12 active sawmills to 2. (Whilst there may be other small sawmills left operating to some degree I have used the example of the ones that we serviced).

One fact that is often overlooked (purposefully in many cases), is that almost all of our forests are selectively harvested, therefore the actual forest area does not decrease over time but is continually harvested in due cycles. On the other hand, when a forest is locked up the area does not increase but simply becomes a tangled mess and a major fire hazard. While I can appreciate that from time to time there are species of flora & fauna that can be somewhat adversely affected during the short cycle of harvesting it does not seem to be in balance with the complete loss of livelihood & lifestyle experienced by rural communities who have had their forests locked away. I may stand corrected but I am not aware of any documented cases of species pushed to extinction through the actions of selective harvesting.

It must also be recognized that closures to businesses in rural centres are far more reaching than the town itself. There would be many small privately owned based in city areas like ourselves, who rely greatly on the prosperity of the timber and associated primary industries throughout rural NSW.

In closing, it is my opinion that if the Government was genuinely interested in the environment it would be actively involved in securing vacant land to plant new forests and leave the hard working businesses in the timber industry to continue to contribute to a prosperous Australian economy through the logical use of a very renewable resource.

**Yours Faithfully,**

**Ian Watkins**



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