

Ramiens Timber Co Pty Ltd
Timber Merchants & Joinery
1 Cobborah Road Dubbo NSW

Submission

To the Regional Forest Assessment for the
South Western Cypress State Forests

I am writing to comment on the assessment of South-Western Cypress Forests from two points of view, the first as Managing Director of Ramiens Timber, the second as chair of the NSW Cypress Industry Strategic Planning Group.

Ramiens Timber Co.

Ramiens Timber is situated in Dubbo, Central West NSW and up until the Brigalow Assessment of 2005 was a Cypress sawmill with log allocations from Brigalow forest areas. Following the Governments Brigalow Decision in 2005 where approximately 350,000 hectares of previously managed State forest was reserved to create a Community Conservation Area, most mills reliant on this resource exited the Industry. Our decision to exit hinged on our desire to move to a Timber Merchant operation distributing products from the remaining producers. We are now a timber merchant operation with a timber joinery division, and heavily dependent on green sawn and kiln dried Cypress products from Grants Narrandera and Condobolin sawmills. Without these suppliers we would be unable to meet the growing demand for naturally termite resistant and high durability Cypress products. Cypress produced from NSW Quality Certified producers is far superior in quality to that of sawn products produced by Queensland millers, is closer and more cost competitive for the NSW building markets.

Grants are our main Cypress supplier. Our association with Grants goes back some 20 years. We have built a timber retail warehouse as part of our companies restructuring associated with the Brigalow Decision. This business is heavily dependent upon supplies of Cypress products from Grants.

Grants operations provide jobs to the communities of Condobolin and Narrandera. There is no substitute for a profitable enterprise pouring money into the local economy.

Strategic Planning Group;

For the past 7 years I have been Chair of the NSW Cypress Industry Strategic Planning Group. The group has actively promoted the use of Cypress and has launched a number of initiatives to promote and improve the reliability of the product. The most significant of these is a quality assurance programme, which guarantees the consistency and quality of the product. This programme was developed over many years of hard work as saw millers strived to improve their product in the market place

to achieve higher returns for both producers and Forests NSW as the supplier of logs. The FPA initiated Jas approval for Cypress products. This allowed cypress products to be used in Japan's quality focused building market. Both these initiatives required years of planning and are a testament to the determination of the industry to continually strive for excellence. Natural termite resistance, durability class one and a hardwearing surface positions Cypress high in the market place.

The industry's understanding after the Brigalow decision was that all of the Southern Cypress Forests are required to fulfil the Wood Supply Agreement (WSA) supply obligations to the remaining two Cypress Sawmilling Companies. The Paul's operations in the North and the Grants operations in the South.

My concern is that if any current State forests in the assessment area are being considered for reservation under this process, this will have a significant impact on log supply under the current arrangements. For a mill to remain viable and efficient it needs a log supply and log quality mix to match the level of investment. Recent investment under the Brigalow Industry Development Assistance funding program, has geared mills to the current WSA levels of log size and log quality. Any changes to this will have a significant impact on sawmilling businesses.

The management of the South West Cypress forests by Forest NSW provides sawlogs to local mills, employment in small towns, while at the same time producing sound conservation outcomes. As we have seen from the Brigalow decision the reservation of State forests as Community Conservation Reserves has not delivered any additional conservation outcomes than under the previous active management provided by Forest NSW. Ecological thinning was recommended across all tenure types in the Brigalow, however industry notes that to date no ecological thinning has occurred under the Department of Environment Conservation and Climate Change estate. Cypress forests require active management to deliver ecological benefits. As is outlined in the 'NSW Cypress Industry Strategic Plan 2004-10' effective forest management under current tenure delivers:

- The maintenance of healthy and dynamic forests
- Provides a sustainable supply of Cypress products
- Ensure the conservation of flora, fauna and soils
- Provides a range of cultural, recreational and educational pursuits.

I invite the NRC to actively consult with the NSW Cypress Industry, Forest Products Association, and the Strategic Planning Group to ensure their recommendations are soundly based and will not adversely impact on current businesses.

Max Ramien
Ramiens Timber Co
Dubbo