

Forests Assessment  
Natural Resources Commission  
GPO Box 4206  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sir or Madam:

### **River Red Gums and Woodland Forests Assessment**

Thank for the opportunity to comment on the River Red Gums and Woodland Forests Assessment. I have read the document from cover to cover and appreciated the conflicts of interest that arise with the assessment. However, while I sympathise with the future employment of the workers employed in the timber industries in the area I cannot support any move that does not preserve the forests.

These forests are so important to Australia's ecology that they cannot be allowed to die out as will happen if the current operations are not halted or dramatically altered to recognize the unsustainability of these activities.

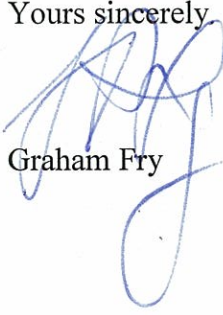
The forests should be saved because:

- The Riverina has been heavily cleared and highly cultivated and it's areas of natural vegetation are poorly represented in the reserve systems.
- The River Red Gums support a large range of endangered fauna many of which are dependant on tree hollows. I recognize that State Forests has procedures in place to prevent logging of trees with hollows. However, they are not allowing older trees which will develop hollows in the future to survive. As a result the current hollow bearing trees will eventually die and fall over and there will be nothing to take their place if the forests is not preserved.
- Many waterbird species breed in the Red Gum Forests. These birds have been forced out of other areas due to the climate change and reduced water flow and so the Murray forests are an essential part of their survival.
- Your report shows that much of the logging activity is centred on low value activities such as firewood supply, wood chips for landscaping and railway sleepers. The first two of these activities are not essential and can be provided from other plantation sources. The Australian Rail Track Commission now has a policy of replacing timber sleepers with concrete. Other railway and tramway authorities are also changing over to concrete due to their longer life and subsequent financial advantages. It is only a matter of time before the use of timber sleepers will be minimal.

- Climate change will make it more likely that there will be even less water in the Murray than there is at present and so it is likely that the chances of large scale flooding to replenish the ground water will be low. As a result the forests will be under greater stress than they are now and to continue logging under these conditions is clearly not sustainable.

Consequently I encourage you to recommend that logging of these forests be phased out and that the forests be preserved.

Yours sincerely



Graham Fry