

From: Ifeanna Tooth
Sent: Tuesday, 6 October 2009 2:51 PM
To: Felicity Calvert
Subject: Submission to Preliminary Assessment Report on River Red Gums and woodland forests

Forests Assessment
Natural Resources Commission
GPO Box 4206, Sydney NSW 2001

Red Gum & Cypress Forests submission

To whom it may concern

As a trained botanist with a degree in Science and now undertaking a Masters research project on weeds and climate change I would like to emphasise the importance of retaining all of the old growth areas and regenerating woodlands of River Red Gum and Cypress Pine in NSW, particularly in the Riverina Bioregion which is projected to be negatively impacted by climate change in terms of higher temperatures and reduced rainfall. I have also worked on native vegetation and fauna projects in central western NSW and north-west NSW and so am familiar with the ecosystems of the Murray Darling Basin.

The woodlands in the Riverina Bioregion take many years, sometimes hundreds of years to reach maturity. Over this time they provide stability to soil processes, including providing inputs, ameliorating dryland salinity and improving stream bank health, which enhances water quality; they also provide habitat and food for plants and animals, including livestock, and they increase amenity and tourism to the area.

The woodlands grow slowly because this is marginal land with unpredictable weather patterns. The woodlands are adapted to this environment with its fluxes of wet and dry and can usually survive unfavourable conditions. Only a very small percentage of the woodlands in the Riverina Bioregion have been protected in reserves.

Unfortunately in the last 200 years the woodlands have been subjected to additional pressures which have caused dieback and death on a large scale. Additionally there has been little recruitment of River Red Gums and other tree species in the woodlands. This has caused obvious long term degradation to large areas of land, particularly in relation to soil and water health. There have also been many subtle detrimental impacts on ecosystem health which have gone unnoticed and are too detailed to mention here.

From a purely cost benefit analysis perspective it would be far less costly in the long term to cease all logging operations in the region immediately and compensate timber operators and workers than pay for the environmental remediation and loss of livelihood that will be necessary if these operations continue.

Therefore I urge the report to recommend the protection of all areas of native woodland in the Riverina Bioregion and cease all commercial and non-commercial timber removal immediately.

Extensive plantations of River Red Gum and Cypress Pine should be set up immediately to ensure that there will be potential for using this important and useful timber resource and to provide resources for vegetation rehabilitation projects. If nothing is done to protect these areas there will be little left for anyone or anything to utilise and the land and waterways will be degraded to such an extent to make them useless for agriculture, forestry or tourism.

There is a typographical error in the key for Figure 27 on page 121 of 'Chapter 4. Trajectory of climate change' pdf document which describes the green box: there is a missing 'r' where it states "...no decease in winter..." and which should be "...no decrease in winter...".

Yours sincerely,

Ifeanna Tooth