

Dear Commissioners,

I am very happy to see this review being done. Thank you for your work so far. I have grave reservations about the quality and tone of the report. I am disappointed that your Preliminary Report has failed to address the national reserve criteria or the precautionary principle. It seems to lack the foresight of the VEAC report in Victoria. A lot of people are hoping for good environmental outcomes from your assessment.

This is a once in a generation chance for NSW to change the direction of natural resource management in the Riverina and set a new course of conservation and protection. The adaptation to climate change is a very important consideration and brings a new urgency for a new culture of management. If species like the Regent Parrot and the Inland Carpet Python are going to survive, things need to change. Our public forests should not be managed by Forests NSW as they have been shown to be poor custodians. Although it is far from Sydney, the NSW Government must not continue to allow the abusive resource extraction (AGS logging) to occur.

The financial predicament of many Riverina Farmers in the last 10 years of drought and low water allocations, has meant that they have had to get the loggers in to log their red gum, so they can have income. This means large areas of quality habitat, remnant vegetation has been degraded. Hollow dependant fauna species will suffer. There is little you can do about that. But you can protect the Public red gum forests, by making recommendations for new National Parks.

These areas lack scientific scrutiny. There is a gap in the research into ecological processes in these areas. Whether it is flora, fauna or water issues, the damage from logging and grazing must be investigated. I urge you to seek what studies have been done and err on the side of caution.

The cumulative effect of the current management by Forests NSW and the lack of flooding is going to be catastrophic. I urge you to do what you can to intervene in this disaster.

Points from the report:

1. pg 94, Item 3.5.2 Contemporary Aboriginal Values and uses.

Your consultation with Aboriginal groups does not seem accurate, as with my dealings with MLDRIN, they do support a halt to the large scale AGS logging. So your statement in Table 17. "Mildren Doesn't have a particular problem with sustainable forestry per se." seems wrong. This undermines your report.

Surely the Victorian VEAC study and Recommendations and new legislation introduced by the Brumby Government this week must weigh heavily on your minds.

All the Indigenous consultation that led to the joint management arrangements should be duplicated on the NSW side of the border. This would at minimum mean Yorta Yorta and Wadi Wadi country is put into the reserve system and the traditional owners are involved in the new management focussed on conservation.

2. Lack of mention of Inland Carpet Python. I do not see in your report any data of this species. This species is going to go extinct if the NSW and Victorian Government do not enact a strong Species recovery plan for this threatened critically endangered species. This iconic reptile will be lost because of the logging.

I urge you to recommend:

1. Extensive new Red Gum National Parks because:

* Under the national reserve criteria Red Gum is a vulnerable ecosystem that needs a 60% reservation target

- * Red Gum forests are vital refuges for plants and animals in a rapidly warming world
 - * National Parks are crucial to ecosystem resilience 2. Joint management of new National Parks because:
 - * Red Gum forests are living cultural landscapes that provide bush foods & medicines and contain many cultural sites
 - * Traditional Owners hold critical ecological knowledge and have cultural obligations to care for country
 - * Joint Management brings new employment opportunities for Aboriginal communities 3. Much improved environmental water flows to ensure the health of Red Gum into the future 4. A fair restructure package for individuals and businesses affected by the changes.
- Thankyou,

Dr Jacquie Kelly