

From: Ross Macfarlane
Sent: Wednesday, 14 October 2009 5:32 PM
To: Felicity Calvert
Subject: River Red Gum forests

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my interest and concern with respect to the state of river red gum forests in south-western New South Wales, in light of the NSW Natural Resources Commission is currently undertaking.

I was raised on a farm in the Victorian Mallee but had close ties with New South Wales, attending school in Tooleybuc, and spending many weekends at my grandparents' home on the banks of the Murray River at Goodnight. I still visit the region regularly and in recent years have observed with dismay the decline of the forests along the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Darling Rivers, starved of water and subject to grazing pressures and the spread of horticultural plantations.

In 2008 the Victorian Government committed to creating a series of national parks and reserves in the red gum forests of the Murray-Goulburn system. These will continue to struggle and compete for scarce water resources, but it's a step in the right direction. I urge the NRC and the NSW Government to follow suit and take urgent action to benefit the native plants, animals, birds and fish, and enhance the health of the river system itself, by:

- Significantly increasing the proportion of red gum forest in national parks and reserves (currently less than 2% of the NSW Riverina)
- Implementing the progressive phase-out of all logging of red gum in SW NSW, and
- Making provision for environmental flows into stressed forests in significant habitats, to preserve the trees and enhance the forests.

Best Regards,
Ross Macfarlane