

Forest Assessment  
National Resources Commission  
GPO Box 4206,  
Sydney NSW

16 October 2009

Dear Commissioner Members,

**Subject: Red Gum Forest Assessment,**

Gulpa Sawmill is a company that has been operating sustainably within our local Red Gum Forest for over 150 years. The Mill has been owned and managed by the same family for the past 70 years and today is under the management of the family's 4<sup>th</sup> generation.

Starting off as a small business operating in the Gulpa Forest, Gulpa Sawmill has relocated and grown into the two businesses *Gulpa Sawmill & Gulpa Timbers* now located within the local industrial estate. The mill has approximately thirty employees – eighteen plant, four administration, three management and six forest employees, nine direct contractors and approximately four direct contract services. With the potential for both businesses to grow further in the near future we could expect these staff numbers to increase which in turn will benefit of our local community and its economy.

Our '*Green Off Saw*' product mix consists of select grade boards for table tops and fine furniture, boat timber for paddle steamer repairs and restoration, fence posts for new estates, fence posts for feature fences, post and rail fencing, bollards for road sides, structural crossing timbers and sleepers for railway lines, structural timbers for timber bridge repairs and restoration, retaining walls, garden edging, garden sleepers, fencing dropper's, garden stakes with by-products of firewood, chips and sawdust.

In our Dry mill we produce value added dried and dressed timber for furniture, slabs for table tops, stair case material, lining boards, tongue and grove flooring, decking screening and other small structural timbers.

For some of our employees, including indigenous employees, this is their first job starting off into the real world after leaving school. Some stay on with the company, we have long standing employees of up to 25 years some have been in the industry for 40 years working through to their retirement.

Our staff rely on the continuation of this business. Many local companies are also closely linked. For example, freighters (timber haulers), mechanics, local fuel distributor , irrigation suppliers, hard ware suppliers, electricians, auto electricians engineers, stationery suppliers, computer sales and support and utilities such as telephone and electricity.

Our local community members need us as well. Many people have relied on us in excess of thirty years. We donate generously to local community groups and projects. We have supplied timber and wood chips to schools and community groups. Local services such as the local hospital and nursing homes, local ambulance station, Search and Rescue and sporting clubs have used our Red Gum for improvement and beautification of their sites and their own fund raising initiatives.

In late 2000 the Redgum industry along with Forest Products Association (FPA) attended a meeting with Forests NSW to commission a *Redgum Industry Development Strategy* at Wagga Wagga. The then current Carr Government indicated to sawmills that those mills that invested in value adding within their operations in the future would benefit in regards to future licencing arrangements.

Since then under this advice we have expanded our business reinvesting thousands of dollars (that we would otherwise have been hesitant to do) on buildings, an imported kiln, equipment and training to introduce processes such as Kiln drying and dressing to add value to our timber.

With current Government enquiries (both State & Federal) our plans have not been completed due to the uncertain future of our forest access.

We need stability brought back into the industry with the introduction of a perpetual license for sawmills. We have demonstrated long term sustainability and willingness to invest in our business and local community as well as maintain stable employment for a range of people.

We welcome the inquiry and its transparency. We acknowledge that many of the city people are being misinformed about the forests, through self interested parties.

The truth is the entire flora, fauna and wetlands within the Red Gum forests are heavily protected. Since the introduction of Forests NSW and their implementation of forest management and harvest plans from 1916, the forests in this area have not diminished in size but grown in world status as with the coveted Ramsar Listing.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Danckert  
Director  
**Gulpa Sawmill**