

Subject: Forests' Assessment

Dear Natural Resources Commission,

I am glad that you are assessing River Red Gum forests in NSW.

It is crucially important that you rapidly assess the critical threats facing the River Red Gum forests and recommend strong conservation action. At least 69 plants and animals are threatened with extinction, including the Squirrel Glider, Regent Parrot and Southern Bell Frog.

Red Gum are already under severe stress and are dying as a result of changed water regimes, yet are still being targeted for intensive logging and grazing.

I would like to make the following comments on the terms of reference:

1. The environmental crisis facing River Red Gums is severe. I believe a decision needs to be made and implemented quickly so new National Parks can be created before the end of the year.
2. I believe it is crucial that the precautionary principle is applied in full - given the paucity of detailed environmental surveys in the region. It is important that proper precaution is applied on the side of environmental protection.
3. The terms of reference should include water management and take into account the impacts of climate change on future water availability.
4. I believe that the identification of large new National Parks should be specified in the terms of reference as a key outcome from the assessment.
5. I believe that interim protections should be imposed to protect Ramsar wetlands from illegal patch-clearfelling while the assessment takes place.
6. I believe it should be clear how the requirements of the EPBC Act will be met, and specifically what process under that Act will be applied and how the approval process will proceed.
7. The Terms of Reference need to provide stronger and more specific involvement of indigenous people and consultation with indigenous communities. The TOR should require close investigation of Aboriginal Ownership of conservation reserves wherever sought by Traditional Owners.

I look forward to the news that you have acted stongly and swiftly in these matters.

Sincerely Yours,
Genevieve Moore