

Submission: G & T Gelletly

Assessment of Red Gum Forest in the Riverina

Geoff started our business 22 years ago, with one chainsaw and an old truck doing silvicultural thinnings on Gunbower Island.

Approximately 20 years ago we shifted our operation to the Red Gum Forests around Barham NSW and have grown to a fully mechanised operation employing seven people. (One more to commence early September 09)

We produce 8000 tonnes of logging residue annually. We have also commenced thinning with a purpose built harvester, 5000 tonnes of residue plus higher grade logs for milling were produced in the last twelve months. The harvester has a computer to automatically maximise mill log production with the balance used when dry for firewood. We are awaiting advice on recent tender for 10,000 tonnes of silvicultural thinnings residue

We operate under strict guidelines, supervised by forest NSW. We take pride in the contribution we make to the ongoing forest health and sustainability.

The points we would like you to consider are:

1/ Economic loss to the area including job losses. All parts, repairs and fuel are sourced locally wherever possible.

We have \$1,400,000 invested in our business, having purchased another allocation in the last 12 – 15 months, encouraged by Forest NSW to enable them to reduce timber licence numbers. This has assisted them to meet their various accreditation requirements. This has increased our borrowings and risk substantially.

2/ The degradation of the forest which will occur if “ locked up “. Fire will be a devastating factor of life. Red Gums do not survive fires.

3/ The firewood industry is carbon neutral. No other form of energy can claim this.

4/ We believe the forests are currently sustainably managed. This is apparent when visiting the forest and studying the conservation values used by Forest NSW and is born out by the recent EIS.

5/ To assist the forest survive the current prolonged drought, it is essential to reduce competition for available water by silvicultural thinnings.

We firmly believe that the path to sustainability of our forest is to recognise that selective harvesting drives renewal and forest health.

To achieve this requires investment which in turn requires a certainty of future sustainable harvesting.

Geoff and Todd Gelletly.