

Subject: Forests Assessment

Forests Assessment

Natural Resources Commission

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1. The Terms of Reference (TOR) need to provide stronger and more specific involvement of Traditional Owners. The TOR should require that Aboriginal Ownership of conservation reserves is recommended wherever sought by Traditional Owners.
2. It is crucial that the precautionary principle is applied in full. Given the paucity of detailed environmental surveys in the region, we should err on the side of caution and protect habitat rather than clearfell log it then wait and see if threatened species survive.
3. There is no reserve system to protect river red gum forests despite the National Forest Policy Statement mandating that at least 15% (of the pre-European extent) of each Australian forest type be protected in permanent reserves. Identification of large new National Parks should therefore be specified in the terms of reference as a key outcome from the assessment.
4. The continued logging of red gum forests whilst the assessment is being conducted is illegal and must be halted immediately. Logging in NSW red gum forests is currently illegal under both the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979)* and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)*.

sincerely

Michael Mardel