

Subject: NSW River Red Gum and woodland forests assessment.
Forests Assessment
Natural Resources Commission 22/08/2009

To the Natural Resources Commission

I believe that it is crucial for Commission to assess the threats facing the River Red Gum forests and recommend strong and immediate action to reduce or avert those threats.

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

1. A decision to create protected areas needs to be implemented soon, before the end of this year. The environmental crisis facing River Red Gum forests is severe and cannot wait.
2. Given the paucity of detailed environmental surveys in the region it is crucial that the Commission proceed with caution and err on the side of environmental protection.
3. I support the inclusion in the terms of reference of water management and 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 support the inclusion of EPBC matters in the assessment but 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.

Sincerely
Regina Bos