

Todd GELLETLY'S

Submission regarding the

Terms of Reference Assessment of

Riverina Red Gum Forests



My name is Todd GELLETTY, I have 13 years experience in the Red Gum Timber Industry. I hereby make this submission to the Natural Resources Commission in respect to the Terms of Reference set out on public display.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Natural Resources Commission for taking the time to visit our region and inspect the area in which we work.

The focus of my submission is based on two points, firstly the need to recognise the outcomes of the recent Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) released by the Department of Primary Industries NSW in conjunction with Parks NSW in relation to the Red Gum Forests of the region in focus and secondly the critical need for industry input into the future management of these magnificent Forests.

I read a quote from the Commissioner of the Natural Resources Commission stating that a recent study conducted in Victoria into the impacts of Logging on Red Gum Forests would be explored. The Natural Resources Commission must be aware that the group responsible for this report paid scant regard to industry input. Having met with them personally, I found them totally unwilling to listen to an alternative point of view to the one that they had formed based totally on a lack of knowledge and experience. To call themselves independent was nothing short of an out an out lie.

The recent EIS conducted in the Riverina Region must be explored by the Commission and the results within, formed on independent research with no industry input, must override any other report tabled in relation to Red Gum Forests.

I would like to state as a former member of the Victorian Police Force I am aware that to qualify as an expert witness in a Court of Law you must have, a tertiary qualification OR have spent ten years minimum in the particular field in which you are providing evidence on. Therefore I implore the Natural Resources Commission to consider any opinions put forward by industry as expert opinion, based solely on what industry considers as the most beneficial management practises for the sustainable future use of this unique resource.

The representatives of the Red Gum Timber industry that you met on your trip to the Deniliquin region and subsequent forest tour have an abundance of knowledge in relation to the inner workings of a Red Gum Forest.

Prior to the Natural Resources Commission arriving for lunch at Picnic Point at Mathoura I personally handed around a sheet of paper asking representatives from the Red Gum Timber industry to list their name and years of experience in the industry. The collective number of years totalled Three Hundred and Eighty Nine years in the Red Gum Timber Industry. Some of members of the industry are third and fourth generation Red Gum Timber Industry contributors.

The point I'm trying to make clear is that as a group, members of the Red Gum Timber industry care a great deal about these forests and that the current sustainable management practises of the Red Gum Forests in our region must be recognised as a combination of providing the best possible environmental and economic outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

For example if a member of the Natural Resources Commission was interested in investing money into a business or real estate in the region, I'm sure that person would conduct their research at a local level. The same applied in the Police Force, if a particular problem of unlawfulness arose, either state or local government would consult local police to formulate a plan to reduce the impact of the particular problem.

I am glad the issue of climate change has arisen within this assessment. If what the experts are saying is true then climate change, if these forests are left un managed (ie: turned into National Parks), will have a devastating effect on the health and future prosperity of the Red Gum forests in our region. Active management is the key to the Red Gums surviving.

As a representative of the Red Gum timber industry, I am more than satisfied that the work and research currently conducted by State Forest NSW is more than sufficient in ensuring the best possible environmental outcome for the future management of this magnificent resource for all cross sections of society to enjoy for generations to come.

While I am glad the natural Resources Commission has taken the time to meet with industry I felt that the Commission should have spent more time within the Red Gum Forests to inspect a range of uses that these forests offer.

I invite all members of the Natural Resources Commission to re visit the Barham area at a time of your choosing to take a closer look into what actually happens on the forest floor and the truly positive impact the Red Gum timber Industry has on the Red Gum Forests, after all we have been environmentally managing these Forests for just on One Hundred and Fifty years and with the guidance of Forests NSW have been able to produce the best possible environmental outcome for the forests health. Couple that with the economic benefits that follow to the surrounding communities then what industry has created is nothing less than a totally beneficial outcome, firstly for the environment a secondly providing employment and economic benefits for the local communities that were built on the back of the timber industry.

If the Natural Resources Commission has any queries please do not hesitate to contact myself on the below details.

Todd GELLETTY