

To: Felicity Calvert

Subject: New South Wales Red Gum Assessment submission

Wednesday 26/09/2009

To Whom It May Concern,

Forests Assessment
Natural Resources Commission

I write to you with regards to your assessment into the Red Gum forests and wetlands of New South Wales.

I urge you to make recommendations that will allow for new Aboriginal Owned National Parks.

I am concerned that your Terms of Reference (TOR) provide a weak position with regards to specific involvement of Traditional Owners. I feel that your TOR should require that Aboriginal Ownership of conservation reserves is recommended wherever sought by Traditional Owners. Surely past history tells you that this is simply not good enough a strategy for anyone involved?

It is crucial that the precautionary principle is applied in full. Being that minimal environmental surveys have been undertaken in the region, we should be immediately careful and go more with a "prevention is better than a cure" philosophy, therefore protecting habitat and species before discovering too late that we have wiped out threatened species.

Within your assessment area, you would know, are trees that date to pre-European settlement - being that there is a National Forest Policy Statement that mandates at least 15% (of the pre-European extent) of each Australian forest type be protected in permanent reserves, I am sure you agree that the identification of large new National Parks should be specified in the TOR as a mandatory outcome of your assessment

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).

Many thanks,
Vanessa Culliford