

**Submission to the Bushfire Crisis in Australia
in 2019 - 2020**



What remains of a 300 year old Red Gum Habitat tree, destroyed in less than 5 minutes by fire. For every year this tree has survived for it took 1 second to per year of its life to destroy it and its inhabitants.



**The world as we have
created it is a process
of our thinking. It
cannot be changed
without changing
our thinking.**



Albert Einstein

**In order to prevent the current bush fire crisis reoccurring
Governments must change the way they think about Native
Forestry Management Regardless of Land Tenure. Fuel
Loads within Native Forests must never reach these levels
again, otherwise history will repeat itself.**

Please click on the link for a short clip

<https://youtu.be/laxc2RuRnCQ>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Our business has been a producer of renewable energy since 1987. Starting off from humble beginnings cutting chipwood for the sawmill in Cohuna, then wood for the boilers at the local milk and brick factories, to now being one of the largest producers of Red Gum firewood in South Eastern Australia.

Our business employes 19 staff and is part of a wider local industry that employs in excess of 100 local people which apart from farming our industry is the largest employer in the region.

I personally have been involved in Red Gum harvesting for over 30 years. I have seen first hand the government interference in our industry when the Labor Government of the time handed down the “Red Gum Decision” Since

then it is known far and wide by all sides of politics that this particular decision was a disgrace and made purely for political gain of one particular party.

I have also witnessed first hand the positive outcomes our industry produces for the forests and then the benefits that flow onto our community

The products our industry produce are all from sustainable operations. Basically every tonne we harvest grows back in a one year period over the forest estate in which we operate. So it doesn't take too much intelligence to realise that this style of harvesting can go on for ever. You could say it's the ultimate in sustainability!!!! If it is growing back at the same rate we harvest it, that makes it carbon neutral.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF OUR HARVESTING OPERATIONS.

Reduced Fuel loads

Keeping Access tracks open and clear

Reduction in likelihood of bush fire entering the crown

Reduction in intensity of the fire

Reduction in resources required to control a fire

Reduction in area fire will impact

Reduction in time and cost of fighting a fire

Reduction in the loss of life, think about that point please.



Photo of the funeral service for Patrick and Robert Salway who lost their lives defending their home on New Years Eve 2019 near Cobargo NSW.

Reduction in the loss of property

Reduction in the loss of forest inhabitants, the very thing the environmental movement want to protect by locking the front gate.

A critical presence in the forest on a daily basis. This was brought to bear when on the 16th of January 2020 at approximately 4pm a lightning strike from a storm was able to ignite a bushfire.

Our crew members swung into action straight away putting in fire breaks around the fire to contain it in the first instance while awaiting FCNSW to attend and take over control. The fire was 1-2 hectares in size once properly contained. Our crew also have qualifications in fire fighting and our efforts in conjunction with FCNSW and the local RFS brigades kept the size of the fire to just 1-2 hectares.

The fire was contained within 4 -5 hours of it being reported and was blacked out the following day with minimal cost to the taxpayer.

Only two large habitat trees and one recruit habitat tree were lost in this fire.

Had this been a National Park the fire would likely have not been reported until the next day, grown to in excess of 50 to 100 hectares. This would have then taken over a week maybe even a fortnight to contain and black out. The cost of this to the taxpayer would have been in excess of \$100,000. The loss of important habitat and recruit habitat trees would have been in excess of 400.

BIO FUEL.

Bio Fuel can provide the answer to the problem. The environmental movement want renewable energy, well Australia's Native Forests have an abundance of renewable sustainable energy.

Due to the poor management practices over the last 20 – 30 years we have wasted billions of tonnes of renewable energy since September 2019. It has literally gone up in smoke.

Not only have we wasted billions of tonnes of renewable energy we have incurred an incredible cost in fighting the fires which I imagine would be beyond any investment required into the solution to the problem.

The timber industry can provide a solution to the extreme fuel loads that have been allowed to build up over decades.

Governments must be prepared to invest in Bio Fuel plants to utilise residues from harvesting operations. These bio fuel plants can be strategically located to streamline the process from the harvesting of the timber to the efficient delivery to the Bio Mass Plant to produce energy.

I propose that many of the sawmills throughout the state of NSW are ideal locations for a number of reasons.

1. Their locations are relative to the timber supply areas and additional employment in regional areas would strengthen local communities.
2. A lot of the infrastructure is already in place ie: Roading network, log yards, log handling equipment to name but a few.
3. The critical industry knowledge is already in place. Harvest and haulage crews along with Mill owners and operators are already there just give them more to do and they will manage the forests and fuel loads for you, pay you money in the form of timber royalties and then produce energy to put into the grid. Fully integrated operations will return to the entire Native Forest Estate regardless of land tenure. This can be done completely sustainably.
4. The business acumen of the saw mill owners has been proven over a long period of time, in many cases over multiple generations.

Alternatively opt for entirely new sites that are located in relation to the timber supply and maximise the efficiencies of getting power back into the grid.

If we don't utilise the products and reduce the fuel loads this will happen again and again.

LOCKING THE GATE TO THE FORESTS IS NOT THE ANSWER

How does a National Park "protect" the landscape?? Can anyone answer that question please?

According to the Institute of Foresters Australia there is 20 million Hectares of Native Forests in NSW. Production Forests make up just 2 million hectares of that. How is Native Timber Harvesting the problem here?

National Parks management practices are pretty simple, just lock it up and leave it. Look where that has lead us to.

500,000,000 animals yes five hundred million, or half a billion animals have perished in these fires since September and at the time of reporting this number it equated to 29,000,000 animals per week for the duaration of the fires to that time. Something the timber industry could never contribute such mass destruction to. An horrific outcome. In fact if you apply the 500,000,000 animals killed in these fires over 100 years of timber harvesting, that equates to 100,000 animals the industry would have had to have killed every year for 100 years.

We can still have National Parks, yet the management of them has to change. Why in Australia, the hottest and driest continent on earth, do we lock up forests for their protection? When you then add that many of these forests are Eucalyptus it makes no sense at all.

The Australian Oxford Dictionary describes Eucalyptus Oil as Any of several volatile oils extracted from the leaves.....

Volatile oils, locked up with little to no management of the fuel loads in which it is surrounded by. You couldn't make this up. How stupid are we?????

Could you imagine allowing an above ground gas tank like you see at service stations all over Australia have grass, logs and debris build up around and under it???? They'd be shut down in an instant and made to clean up the fire hazard around the tank.

When you pull into a service station to fill up your car there are several management practices in place to ensure a fire doesn't start but yet we lock up huge tracts of land with billions of tonnes of eucalyptus trees within them in the full knowledge that in sumertime lighting strikes are ever present and will start bushfires, not might or maybe, they definitely will.

That's just one cause of fire then we have arsonists and a whole myriad of causes that can, will and do lead to devastating bush fires.

A locked up Eucalyptus Forest in Australia with extreme fuel loads building year on year is just a bushfire crisis sitting idle for 5, 10 or 20 years just waiting

for the right weather conditions to present themselves and a source of ignition and within minutes we have an out of control bushfire that then turns into a fire like we saw impact Cobargo in NSW. Uncontrollable, unpredictable and devastating anything that gets in its path. Killing people, destroying property, devastating the forests and its inhabitants along with generations of blood sweat and tears.

We have to change the management of our Native Forests now.

AUSTRALIAN POPULATION GROWTH

If Australia continues with the current average population growth rate (1.5%), by 2050, the Australian population will reach 40 million and by 2100 it will reach 53 million, which means Australia's population will more than double by 2100.

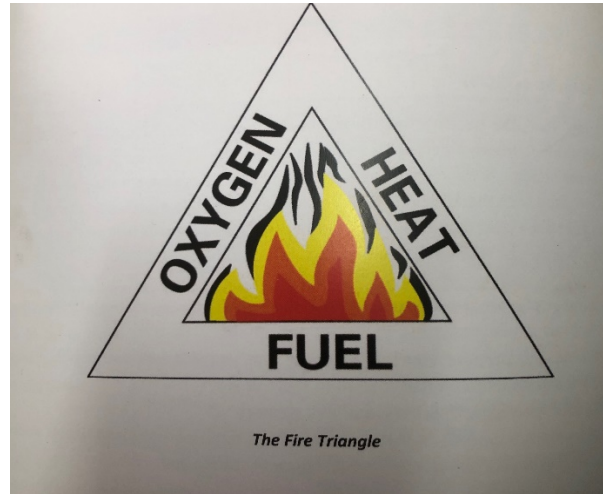
The Eastern Sea-board is the most populated area of Australia for obvious reasons.

Where are they all going to live? How are we going to provide the essential services for this population number? Where will our "base load" power come from to "keep the lights on?"

They all can't live in the city. The facts are there will be a higher population living in regional areas surrounded by Native Forests. So into the future bushfires of any consequence will impact higher numbers of populated areas and then add the increase in population in these area's which will kill more people, devastate more communities unless we change the management and fuel loads of Native Forests.

THE FIRE TRIANGLE

A fire only need three things to continue burning. Heat, Oxygen and Fuel, take away any one of these three components and the fire will go out.



OXYGEN.

Oxygen makes up about 20 percent of the atmosphere and is virtually impossible to remove from a wildfire.

HEAT.

Every fuel has a temperature at which it will burn. Once a fuel reaches its particular ignition temperature it ignites. Fire sends a lot of energy into adjacent unburnt fuels, drying out moisture levels, then it, the adjacent fuel, catches fire and the fire grows.

FUEL.

Fuel is anything that will burn under suitable conditions. The more fuel available the more intense the fire. Fuel has a multiplier effect in that if you double the fuel you quadruple the intensity. If you quadruple the fuel load you increase the intensity by 16 times.

Fuel is the only thing we can control in the landscape. We possess the ability to reduce the fuel loads so why aren't we doing it?

https://youtu.be/7gixG_kN6x8 This short clip, while made in the U.S. certainly applies here in Australia. The answer is simple, reduce the fuel loads in Australia's Native Forests.

The reintroduction of Cattle grazing should be immediate as should cultural cool burns and Hazard Reduction burning operations be given greater funding.

A combination of measures to reduce the fuel load in our Native Forests is the key to reducing the impacts and devastation of Bush Fires not only on communities but the forests themselves.

The environmental movement will argue against the use of Bio Fuel but history has shown every 10, 20 or 30 years it burns anyway. So what's the flaming difference? At least with Bio Fuel it creates jobs, creates renewable energy and controls the fuel loads in Native Forests. The benefits that flow on from this for Native Forests make this proposal worthwhile.

One senior EPA official has been quoted as saying just package out the forest industry. In other words pay out the Native Timber Industry to close it down all together. If you say it really quickly it doesn't really sink in what the ramifications would amount to.

If the industry disappears all the equipment is sold off out of the local industries and communities, where will the equipmet come from to contain a fire? How much money has the government spent on the hire of harvesting contractors equipment during these fires? How many hours has the equipment used in timber harvesting been hired for, to assist with these fires?

If the industry disppears so will all the equipment and importantly critcal local knowledge.

WHEN YOU TALK, YOU ARE
ONLY REPEATING WHAT YOU
ALREADY KNOW. BUT IF YOU
LISTEN, YOU MAY LEARN
SOMETHING NEW.

DALAI LAMA

RED GUM STATE FOREST EXAMPLE OVER SUMMER of 2019 - 2020

Over the summer of 2019/2020 our business was called upon to assist in the fight of 5 fires within the local Red Gum State Forests. We provided an immediate response and had men and machinery on the fire ground within an hour of being called out. At one such fire our harvesting crew employees were the first responders to a lightning strike nearby our operations.

Can anyone tell me why that with no less than 5 fires in the Red Gum State Forests that we didn't suffer catastrophic fires like the rest of NSW and Victoria? Why did we only have fire impact a maximum of 20 Hectares from 5 fires?

The answer is simple, there wasn't the available fuels for the fire to spread. Why wasn't there fuels available? The local timber industry conducts fully

integrated operations removing saw log and marketable residues in a single pass. The Director of Native Hardwood Division of FCNSW [REDACTED] has stated that the Red Gum Forests have the best utilisation of any State Forest in the State of NSW.

One such fire in November 2019 we attended and on a catastrophic fire rating day of 44 degrees and gusty winds, a skeleton crew of 5 timber industry members and one supervising FCNSW employee kept the fire contained within the containment lines. Experienced industry members working alongside experienced FCNSW staff was critical but the overriding factor was the lack of available fuel for the fire to consume and grow to a size and strength beyond our capacity to contain it. How do I know this, I was there on the ground fighting the fire and we did an incredible job.

If Bio Fuel plants are invested in and positioned at strategic locations across the state the entire native forest estate can have its fuel loads reduced and utilised in the creation of renewable energy. Regional communities will prosper, the forests will benefit and the economy will be stronger and the future reduction of bush fire devastation will benefit the entire country.

Options for the Government are simple,

1. Invest into industries that can utilise residues reducing bush fire threats into the future.
2. Or just do nothing and every 20 to 30 years' history will repeat itself until changes are made in relation to Native Forest Management in Australia.

I welcome anyone to use the utilisation of the Red Gum Industry as a roadmap to future proofing to the best of our ability our Native Forests across the State and the Country for that matter.

[REDACTED]
30 years hands on experience in Native Forest Management.