

Your details

Title

Mr

First name

Glenn & Terry

Last name

Poole

Submission details

I am making this submission as

A business owner

Submission type

I am submitting on behalf of my organisation

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)

Glenn Poole Contracting Pty Ltd - Logging Contractor & Primary Producer & Forest Owner

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)

Owner

Consent to make submission public

I give my consent for this submission to be made public

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

My husband and I have operated a selective logging operation (timber harvesting) in private native hardwood forests in the North Coast area of NSW for over 20 years. In addition, we value add to this primary production with timber drying kilns producing select grade timbers predominately for the high end Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane market for internal stairs, joinery (windows and doors) and furniture.

We both grew up in the Orara Valley, in the Coffs Harbour area and are becoming increasingly frustrated with the

perception that native forest harvesting (logging) has a detrimental effect on the environment and its wildlife, in particular Koalas. There is ever increasing opposition to native forest harvesting from, mostly, misinformed entities who advocate preservation as the sole objective of native forest management. Indeed, try to cut down any tree - be it in your backyard as it poses a falling limb danger to your family or an encroaching area of regrowth around your home that is posing a fire threat and you will be met with heavy opposition. It seems that all trees are sacred and cannot be cut down regardless of the risk they pose.

Unfortunately, we have seen first hand the destructive result of this management style having lost two machines in the November 2019 bush fires which started in a National Park that has little to no fire management practices actively enforced. The overall loss of homes, property, livestock and the timber resource in our area is far too great for us to comprehend or compute - it is simply devastating.

Growing up in the Orara Valley area, yearly burn offs of bush land was normal and wide spread, logging was not considered a "dirty word", fire trails were continually maintained by forestry crews with the knowledge, skills and plant required to apply preventative measures routinely as well as the ability to mount rapid and aggressive first response to any fire outbreaks. Cattle grazing also contributed to the management of fuel reduction in the National Parks and reserves - these massive fuel reserves were a major contributing factor in the catastrophic fires we witness in our area in 2019.

Unfortunately, we feel the majority of our population who live in metropolitan Australia have little to no real life knowledge of our regional landscape and are being persuaded by this "feel good" mentality that is incorrectly representing the timber industry of Australia.

We sincerely hope this inquiry and the Royal Commission into the 2019/2020 bush fires is able to rectify the public misconception that actively managing Australia's native forests, be it privately owned, State Forests or National Parks, is the only way to minimise the risks of bush fires that are an inevitable risk in our environment.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#).

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

*Increased areas of National Parks, Conservation Parks and Reserves with an emphasis on preservation resulting in no burning off or fire trail management, which in turn is resulting in a continuing increased accumulation of fuel and a lack of access hindering rapid vehicular responses to fires.

*An increase in "locked gates" particularly in National Parks preventing community based exploration which leads to individual management, ie 4WD enthusiasts and the like keeping tracks open enabling emergency response crews access.

*Removal of cattle grazing in many Conservation Areas and National Parks which helped maintain lower fuel levels.

*Constrictive "red tape" processes delaying and more often preventing forestry burning off, in conjunction with the requirement of impact studies and reports before burning off can be approved - a costly and detrimental process.

*Ridiculous "Green" Council regulations preventing adequate bush clearing to protect homes and properties from bush fires.

*Overwhelming "Green" mentality from local councils in particular supporting the dangerous philosophy that locking up all the bush will save all of Australia's' wildlife and native habitat - these 2019/2020 bush fires proved without a doubt how wrong this policy is.

1.2 Preparation and planning

*As people who work in the forestry industry and have lived in the area our whole life, we can assure you there is no

preparation or planning taking place in comparison to what is required.

*There is extremely little fire trail management taking place (absolutely none in most National Parks)

*There is no routine burning off.

*If you are led to believe otherwise, we can assure you, you are being fooled. No doubt in theory and on paper it takes place, but in practice it isn't happening to any degree that has any affect at all.

1.3 Response to bushfires

*The world can see how poorly our response went. It is impossible to stop bush fires when given prolonged hot dry weather with little to no preparation. Add to that years of fuel build up to burn and then facilitate obstacles that prevent vehicular access and it is a catastrophe waiting to happen - as it did.

*Our first hand experience as bulldozer operators hired to establish firebreaks in our area was to open up trails that should have been open already. Critical time wasted and criminally, when opportunities presented themselves to back burn from strategically safe positions and put out the fires - permissions was declined!

1.4 Any other matters

*The RFS's response to protect property, while admirable, had no affect on fighting or containing the bush fires - through no fault of the volunteers who make up the service. Unfortunately, the RFS no longer comprises of competent experienced forestry crews and plant operators who know and understand the bush and have the skills required to prevent and mitigate the effects that bush fires create.

*Notably, of all the budging protesters we encounter during our working days every year harking on about "saving the forest", we encountered none helping out during this time of crisis. It was the volunteers who took time off work, the sole operators and small business owners of earth moving equipment who stopped the jobs they were on to respond along with the logging contractors and State Forest workers who were out there working through the long hours of days and nights fighting the fires. Typically hypocritical of the do-gooders of our society.

Supporting documents or images
