

Submission to House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture,  
Resources, Fisheries and Forestry

Australia's forestry industry

Dr Ian R. Price

February 24, 2011

I support the submission made by Dr Judith Ajani, Fenner School of Environment and Society, The Australian National University, February 2011

In regard to forestry, for more than 200 years our Australian forests and woodlands have largely been regarded as 'useless bush' that needed to be cleared to allow 'useful' agricultural and other production. If it doesn't move, chop it down.

Although old attitudes die hard in Australia, it is now clear that our remnant native forests and woodlands have enormous value to the community. One only needs to mention their existing huge, efficient, no-cost natural carbon sequestration and oxygen production. They also have great and varied amenity value for the people of Australia. In terms of their enormously diverse and often unique wildlife (plant, microbial and animal) diversity, they are priceless and can point the way to a sustainable and habitable future for the planet and humankind.

Against this can be set the long and ongoing sad saga of forestry in Australia. In recent times in particular, inefficient, destructive and unsustainable practices have only continued by raiding of the public purse and apparently fiddling of the books. It is most timely for a truly independent, rational and unbiased review of the most effective and productive use of these rich and marvelous communities that have developed over millennia on this continent. Has 'intelligent' humankind ever produced anything to compare with a naturally sustainable tree, let alone an entire forest?