

Response to Parliamentary Australian Forest Inquiry into Challenges and opportunities facing the Australian Forestry Industry.

I have been employed in the timber industry all my working life from the age of 16 to where I am today at 51. During my 35 years of owning and operating a sawmill there have been numerous challenges to get over.

One of the most serious threat to small sawmilling businesses like ours is the decline in resource availability. We have seen numerous National Park lock ups to please the greens. Washpool on the north coast, Pilliga in the central west and the river red-gum in the Riverina of NSW are just to name a few. Its about time Governments stopped pondering to the green minority and looked after industry and communities which are so reliant on timber as job security.

Another serious problem our industry has, was the introduction of a consent process in Private Native Forestry. Since its introduction a few years ago the rules which we have to operate under are not achieving the desired outcome for the forest, which upon introduction, our advice had fallen on deaf ears. Land owners have had an asset taken away from them by means of old growth rainforest or riparian buffer zone protection with no compensation to offset these losses thus we are seeing no regard to protection.

Also legislation is in place to stop using forest residues (Tree heads, limbs etc) for the production of clean, green electricity with the greens quoting that it would promote loggers to knock over other trees for resource. What better way to clean up the forest floor, ridding it of fuel for wildfires and turn it into electricity production. A win, win for all concerned I would have thought.

Regards,

Rod Henson