

NSW
10th July 2003

Native Vegetation Inquiry
Productivity Commission

Dear Sirs

I recently submitted a NSW Farmers Association template submission to your inquiry, recorded as TS5.

I thank you for your reply, and the relevant papers forwarded to me.

I wish to make his further submission. I could write at great length, but will endeavor to keep it brief and to the point.

I believe the Native Vegetation Acts of NSW are based on lies and hysteria.

The lies being that European man has "cleared" 90% of Native Vegetation in NSW.

An aeroplane trip from Melbourne to Brisbane, following the Great Dividing Range will show huge tracks of uncleared land. A book researched by Mr Jim Ryan formerly of Cooma and now at Harden NSW reveals that much of the native vegetation is now thicker than when Australia was first sighted by Captain James Cook in 1770.

My father bought the original 1280 acres of my current holding in 1936.

Up until the time of my taking over the property in 1972, this country ran less than one sheep per acre cutting 2 to 3 kilos of wool per head per annum. This was with much of the country "ring-barked", and growing only natural grasses.

Since I took over in 1972 I have JUDICIOUSLY cleared some further timber areas, fertilised with superphosphate, ploughed and sown introduced species of grass and clovers.

This country is now running 3 sheep per acre cutting 6 kilos of wool per head per annum.

One acre is now producing 18 kilos of wool off improved pastures compared to 2 to 3 kilos of wool off the same area of native vegetation.

Value one kilo of wool conservatively at \$6.00 per kilo and we now have one acre producing \$108 worth of wool compared to its unimproved state when it would have been producing \$12.00 to \$18.00 per acre. This increased productivity flows through to further employment in terms of more work for shearers, carriers, wool-broker staff etc, and more EXPORT earnings for me to spend in my local town. If you are serious about PRODUCTIVITY the answer is right there in that equation.

My clearing and pasture improvement program has virtually become non-existent since the Carr Government brought down the SEPP 46 regulations in 1996. I am unwilling to go to huge expense to fill out an application to clear if it is only to be knocked back on a "conservation value" basis. I have already had an application to convert Perpetual Leasehold to Freehold knocked back on the "conservation value" basis.

As for the "conservation value" or biodiversity of my land, I see nothing unique about it. I am virtually surrounded by thousands and thousands of acres of similar bushland, from neighbouring Freehold land, through Forestry (Badja State Forest) to National Parks (Deua-Wadbilliga). The bushlands stretch from my holdings for 60 miles east to the Pacific Ocean, so what is so unique about mine to make it "conservation value" land?

I believe the whole Conservation Movement has an agenda to lock up the bush, which is doing nothing but destroying jobs in rural areas. In the local South East Forests there have been at least 5 hard-wood sawmill closures over the past 15-20 years, resulting in huge job losses in the industry. TIMBER is one of the very few RENEWABLE resources available to us.

If we want PRODUCTIVITY in this country we have to be able to utilize our existing timber resources and improve our pastures by judicious introduction of introduced plant species.

Yours faithfully

ERNIE CONSTANCE