



Wendy Boyle

To: Members Conducting The Inquiry

RE: INQUIRY INTO THE SANDALWOOD INDUSTRY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

I wish to submit my submission into the Sandalwood Inquiry currently being conducted by your Committee.

My name is Wendy Boyle and I am an Aboriginal Woman from the Goldfields Region.

I am an independent person and have decided to submit this submission due to concerns about the fairness in Sandalwood licence allocations, particularly for Aboriginal people (original descendant of this Region).

I have read some submissions already submitted and although I disagree with much of what has been said in the submissions, I do tend to agree with Hon Wendy Duncan where she discusses certain companies with contracts with the Government and the benefits.

One such company stated that they employed over 50% of Aboriginal people in their company. I would say none of this 50% of Aboriginal people are from the Goldfields Region and therefore no benefits are being received by Aboriginal people in the Goldfields Region.

At the present time Sandalwood Licences for this Region (Goldfields) has been provided to the same applicant's year in and year out. Many other persons wishing to apply for a Sandalwood Licence encounter so many barriers.

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As you would be aware from recent activities and media reports, there has been a lot of sandalwood being pulled from the Goldfields Region without licences and being sold on the Black market.

I have met with a few community members in relation to this matter and have ascertained that the process whereby applying for a sandalwood licence is so difficult for many people, thus the reason people are operating without licences and conducting affairs illegally.

Some people have advised that some of the benefits experienced by pulling sandalwood are not mainly monetary but also the ability to take troubled young persons out bush and keep them away from alcohol and drug and/or getting into trouble with the law.

It has also provided healthier family experiences for these people and thereby the main draw card to illegal sandal wooding.

Another big factor is that Aboriginal people often find it difficult to being given opportunities of employment due to low educational backgrounds and skill levels.

They cannot compete with the large number of populations (from around the world) descending on Kalgoorlie for employment and filling all rental properties making more Aboriginal families homeless and or living in crowded situations.

It has also been very difficult for Aboriginal people from this Region to enter land (properties) in the Goldfields Region. Most of the land is owned or leased by Mining Companies, Pastoral Stations, Private and or the Government. The land in which Aboriginal people once roamed now has KEEP OUT signs and this has also brought about the illegal sandal wooding activity.

To apply for a Sandalwood Licence would mean that you have to identify the land you wish to pull sandalwood, you have to find out who owns or leases the land to get their permission in writing then you need to mark out (GPS) the exact area for pulling of sandalwood.

This process provides so many barriers to the applicant. For one, the majority of time you would not have any idea who owns or leases land, this region is such a mess with Mining, Station Owners, Pastorlist, Prospectors, and

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Government Crown Land etc. Therefore who do you approach to get written permission to pull sandalwood from the area?

Two - the majority of people would not have the resources or skills to mark out the land/area for which they intend to pull sandalwood.

These two barriers are enough for applicants not to continue with their application for a sandalwood licence. Please note this process is that same for Seed Collecting which also needs to be reviewed.

There needs to be a process that is user friendly especially to Aboriginal people of this Region.

The Government should also consider in their enquiry as to the benefits being received by the community in which the Sandalwood is being pulled. Example; does it offer employment to members of the local community, is there a rehabilitation program to follow harvesting?

A better system would be;

- Develop and implement a user friendly application process for Sandalwood Licence. This would attract local Aboriginal people to apply for Licences and cut out illegal activity. It would also allow DEC to be able to manage all Sandalwood Affairs in their Region.

DEC may consider assisting all applicants for Sandalwood Licences by providing land owners/leases details and assisting applicants in marking out the area allow to Harvest.

DEC may consider notifying all applicants of land owned by the Government that can be harvested for Sandalwood.

DEC may also consider visiting Sandalwood Licence holders are the harvest sites from time to time to ensure the right amount of sandalwood is being pulled and to assist applicants with other issues.

- The Government may consider developing and implementing a rehabilitation program for sandalwood by employing local community people to rehabilitate the land with sandalwood after harvesting

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- The Government may consider issuing Sandalwood Licences only to persons who have lived in their Region for longer than five years. This would decrease people arriving in the region and applying for sandalwood licences without having any knowledge and respect of the Region.
- The Government may consider developing and implementing a policy into the Sandalwood Licence that brings about awareness to the applicant about Aboriginal Sites of the Region.
- The Government may consider introducing a General Treaty under the Forrest Act that provides a Sandalwood Farm with Rehabilitation Programs (Planting and Seed Collecting etc.) to local Aboriginal People to generate employment in an environmentally appropriate manner.
- The Government may consider making special provisions for so many sandalwood licences to be awarded to Aboriginal people of the region each year.

The above are only a few recommendations that could be considered, I am sure if given the opportunity other Aboriginal Community Members would like very much to meet with the Committee to provide input into this enquiry.

I would also welcome the invitation of being involved with the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Boyle
11th October 2012

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