

Environment and Public Affairs Committee

From: Jess Beckerling
Sent: Friday, 13 February 2015 4:18 PM
To: Environment and Public Affairs Committee; OBrien, Simon; Dawson, Stephen; Ellis, Brian; Brown, Paul; Rowe, Samantha
Subject: Request for an inquiry into the logging of Mowen Forest
Attachments: FPC_Native forest figures_JARRAH_Pie graphs_2013-2014.pdf

Dear Chair, Deputy Chair and Members of the Standing Committee of Environmental and Public Affairs,

Mowen forest is worth more standing than it is as low-value firewood, charcoal, railway sleepers and a small amount of usable timber.

I strongly believe that it is in the public interest for a comprehensive inquiry into the logging of Mowen forest to go ahead, and hope that you will support the community on this issue. It is critical that a moratorium be placed on the logging while this inquiry goes ahead.

Native forest logging now employs fewer than 1000 people, and because it has become financially unviable, it is costing Western Australian taxpayers in subsidies and financial losses by the State agency the Forest Products Commission.

I have attached a graphic that shows the breakdown of jarrah sales in 2013-2014 - it shows that only approximately 10% of the jarrah sold by the FPC last year became sawn timber.

RE: Request for a comprehensive public inquiry into the logging of Margaret River's Mowen Forest

I support the Save Mowen Forest petition and submission to the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs for a comprehensive public inquiry into the logging of Mowen Forest in the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River. The WA Forest Products Commission (FPC) began logging trees in Mowen Forest in early 2015. Further to the submission from Naomi Godden on behalf of the Save Mowen Forest group, I am concerned about the following issues:

1. FPC has undertaken road building in the forest with out-of-date permits, which were issued by DPaW.
2. Contractors under the supervision of FPC have carried out cutting of trees with chainsaws, and machinery movements during the week of a Total Fire Ban throughout the South West.
3. Large potential habitat trees have been felled while many small trees have been marked "habitat" and were protected. Small trees take 120 years to grow to a size considered suitable for nesting and breeding.
4. Logging in Mowen Forest destroys the food and nesting habitat of native fauna species, including 20 threatened and priority species such as the critically endangered (the White Bellied Frog), two being endangered (EN) (Baudin's Cockatoo and Western Ringtail Possum) and eight being classed as vulnerable (VU) (Balston's Pygmy Perch, Brush-tailed Phascogayle, Chuditch/Western Quoll, Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Orange-bellied Frog, Quokka and Western Mud Minnow).
5. A cost-benefit analysis of logging Mowen forest has not been publically provided. Information provided by the Minister for Agriculture and Food, representing the Minister for Forestry in the Legislative Council on 18 September 2014, shows that FPC will receive a net income of only \$90,000 from logging Mowen Forest. However, many costs were not disclosed in the Minister's statement. It is likely that FPC will not make any net income from logging Mowen Forest, and the financial loss is not worth the environmental destruction that occurs.
6. Requests for an Aboriginal heritage survey in Mowen Forest have not been responded to by the FPC.

I request that the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs conduct a comprehensive public inquiry into the logging of Mowen Forest, and that a moratorium is placed on logging activities until the inquiry is completed.

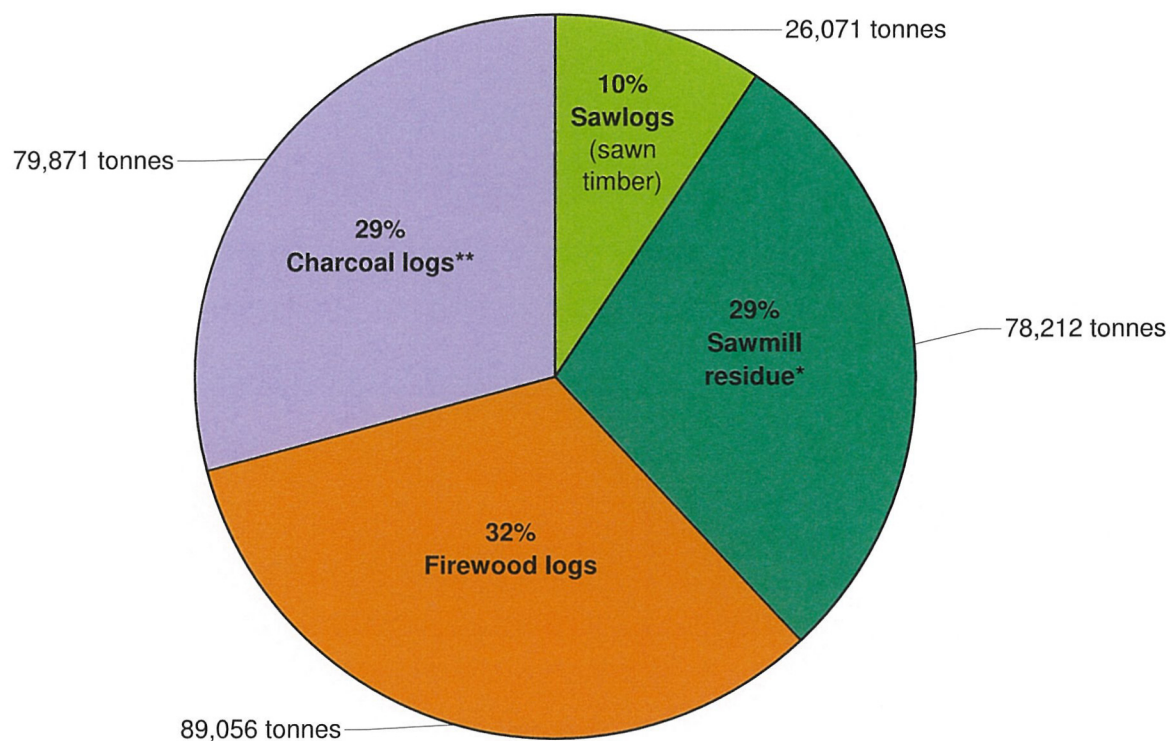
Kind regards,

Jess Beckerling
Convener
WA Forest Alliance

Where our native forest timber goes - JARRAH

Total Jarrah log production 2013 - 2014: 273,210 tonnes

SOURCE: FOREST PRODUCTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014
PREPARED BY WA FOREST ALLIANCE 2014



* Sawmill residue is sold mostly as firewood and charcoal.

** Charcoal logs are sold mostly for silicon manufacture.