



25<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Hon Peter Foster MLC  
Chair, Standing Committee on Environmental and Public Affairs  
Legislative Council Committee Office  
18 – 32 Parliament Place, West Perth

Dear Mr Foster,

**Petition Ref No 052 – Native Logging ban**

Thank you for your letter of 19th May 2022 inviting me to expand on my Native Logging ban petition No 052.

We operate two Perth businesses, Kingsway Firewood (10 + years) & Wangara Sands & Soils (20+ years) we currently employ 10 staff (3 of whom have a disability and are employed via Ability WA). Annually we start to receive our logs in February to prepared 12 months in advance to ensure our customers receive seasoned and dry Jarrah Firewood logs – resulting in very low smoke & emissions. However, this year we were informed by our log suppliers that they cannot supply logs to us for the 2023 season & onwards due to the Native Logging Ban.

Our customer include families, elderly pensioners, social clubs, pizzerias, restaurants, hotels & accommodation, who all rely on native firewood for heating or cooking.

Our points of concern can be expanded as follows.

**Government policy breaches**

There are numerous Government initiatives to reduce emissions e.g. Western Australian Climate Policy, Net Zero Emissions by 2050. This policy change will remove the only source of carbon neutral heating available to the public. Other states such as South Australia and Tasmania are investing in forestry, whilst WA is trying to close it down. It was unreasonable for the government to announce the policy without any legitimate consultation from industry representatives and communities before imposing such a drastic change to the forestry sector.

**Counter-intuitive environmental protection measures**

Western Australian native hardwood harvesting is rigorously regulated and a genuinely renewable and sustainable practice. Currently, the Native Timber industry is a certified sustainable industry and is controlled by the Forest Products Commission, where the coal & gas industry is not. When the native forestry industry no longer exists in Western Australia, all hardwood timber products will have to be imported from overseas (in places such as Brazil, Indonesia and Malaysia) where there is a lack of regulation, and the sustainability measures are questionable.

Native hardwoods are extremely durable and resilient to fire due to their higher density compared to their counterpart alien softwoods. This makes hardwood ideal for all industries including firewood.

Recent research has shown that native hardwood regeneration can potentially absorb 40 times more carbon than plantations and provide a home for more species. It is also significantly cheaper than tree planting.

Households and businesses who have been using firewood will also now have to purchase other forms of heating and cooking appliances, which will not only add to our State's carbon footprint but add to cost of living pressures.



### **Misuse of Native Timber**

While mining companies continue to cut down forests, there will be wood to be disposed of. If the wood is not used for firewood etc., it may be burnt on site by the forest clearing contractors. This is simply nonsensical and would be wasteful. The replacement of native timber with alien softwood does not suit this industry due to it being a soft wood, burning too fast and producing excessive emissions.

### **Bushfire prevention and environmental damage**

Managed forests also pose less of a fire risk when managed responsibly as excess trees and dead timber are removed, and local species protected from fire. The regulated and safe management of forests also encourages forest growth and protects our natural resources from decaying and collapsing on itself. Without native harvesting, managing forest growth and preventing bushfires will become much harder, especially if the technical skills and knowledge of foresters are lost.

### **Economic Impact**

The government is already aware that over 500 direct jobs will be lost as a result of the ban but it has failed to consider the job losses in secondary industries. By ending native hardwood logging in Western Australia, we will not only see the closure sawmills, logging contractors and timber suppliers but also the closure of many firewood merchants, wood heater manufacturers, furniture and floor board manufactures, landscaping supplies, Poultry farms and stables and finally heritage restoration companies.

The cost of Native hardwood has skyrocketed, due to the lack of harvest capacity and operators leaving the industry caused by the Governments ban (enticed by a \$10,000 government incentive). This has affected secondary industries, including Building, Firewood, Landscape, Furniture, Horticulture, Hospitality, Poultry industry to say the least. In the case of firewood, the ban will put cost of living pressure on the most vulnerable households.

### **Potential for illegal logging**

When regulated wood is not available, some market participants will find ways to source illegal WA wood and import wood from other countries to meet their needs. Illegal logging is presently occurring as the general public scramble for firewood to keep warm, without respect or consideration for the forest or environment. Presently the majority of the Native Firewood comes from the Forrest Products Commission, but as there is a shortage, we can assume more people will collect their own firewood.

The Premier & Ministers have not considered the loss of approximately \$250 million of industry income to Western Australia, plus a direct loss of \$16 million of gst revenue to the State Government.

### **Lack of Consulation**

The Government made this decision without consultation with FIFWA, the Forrest Products Commission and all associated industries were shocked by the rash and unjust decision. However we would appreciate a meeting with the Premier & ministers concerned.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to make a submission. I look forward to your recommendations to the Premier, Forestry Minister & Environment Minister and hope that the ban on native hardwood logging in Western Australia is opposed.

Please do let me know if you have any questions or require further information.

Diana Babis (Director)