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# SUBMISSION
## on the proposed resumption of logging in the Brigalow and Nandewar State Conservation Areas

## Introduction

The Clarence Environment Centre (CEC) has maintained a shop-front in Grafton for over 25 years, and has a proud history of environmental advocacy. The conservation of the Australia's natural environment, both terrestrial and marine, has always been a priority for our members, and we believe the maintenance of healthy ecosystems and biodiversity is of paramount importance. .

## General comment

The Hon Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries', comments in his media release on the above subject is full of the tired old rhetoric, again attempting to shore up support for a failing timber industry that is directly responsible for the problems identified in the media release.

We preface the following comments by making it clear that we do not have intimate knowledge of the specific areas in question. However, the principles expressed apply to all forests which have had a long history of logging.

The "dense White Cypress monoculture" that is reported to cover one third of these conservation areas in question, is the result of deliberate forestry practices in the past that promoted the proliferation of Cypress, a preferred commercial species in the area, ahead of other less commercial species. This was helped by the fact that the Cypress is a natural pioneer species, and by the industry never making any attempt to promote or maintain species diversity.

There is no argument to support ongoing logging of native forests in NSW, economic, social or environmental. For more than a decade native forest logging has incurred financial losses that have had to be paid by the State's long-suffering taxpayers who, in return, are seeing their unique forest ecosystems demolished to the detriment of other, much more profitable industries such as tourism. Along with that destruction there has been an associated crash in fauna numbers, and an ever lengthening list of species being declared threatened with extinction.

If there is any argument to support the thinning of Cypress in those conservation areas, it cannot, and should not be undertaken by those same operators that caused the problem in the first instance. It would need to be a scientifically based targeted exercise over a relatively short period, and incorporate the reintroduction of those traditional species that were deliberately removed over time because they were not commercially viable. Certainly thinning cannot be said to *"have the potential to provide long-term social, economic and environmental benefits"* through logging.

We find the continued use of the phrase *"locked up"* particularly irritating. State Conservation areas are some of the most accessible areas in Australia, and are there for all citizens to enjoy. But for some reason a very small minority in the community seem to believe they have exclusive rights to exploit and destroy the intrinsic values of those forests, the provision of the air we breathe and clean water we drink, as well as the aesthetic values of those forests that attract visitors and tourist dollars. At the same time, those undertaking that destruction have an expectation that other citizens will pay for the losses they incur.

In an era when climate change and the drastic need to sequester some of the excess carbon mankind is pumping into the atmosphere is being widely accepted, it makes sense to increase forest carbon sinks, not cut them down. Even the Prime Minister's "Direct Action" policy calls for more trees. With a carbon trading scheme in place, something that will certainly be introduced when Australia wakes up to the reality that the rest of the world has left us behind, all forests will have the potential to become profitable without the need for logging or other destructive enterprises.

**Recommendation.**

We believe the Brigalow and Nandewar State Conservation Areas should be subjected to a serious scientific assessment with its terms of reference focussed on returning the biodiversity of both reserves to their former levels and look at the most cost effective way of doing that, which will likely include taking advantage of future carbon markets.

In particular, the Clarence Environment Centre is strongly opposed to any resumption of the previous damaging commercial exploitation of any of the State's conservation areas.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

John Edwards
Honorary Secretary.