

## Letter to the Editor

### ‘Guest Editorial by Ross Florence’

From Dick Curtin  
Kincumber

I really enjoyed the guest editorial ‘Social Responsibility for NSW Forests’ written by Ross Florence, and published in the March issue of *Australian Forestry* (Volume 68(1)). In general I found it to be both accurate and logical. Ross notes that the early development of pine plantations was basically funded by exploitation of the native forest, although he did not mention the added impact of the Commonwealth Softwood Forest Agreements operating from 1966 to 1977.

Ross argues that society should accept responsibility to restore the productivity of degraded forests and I agree, but warn that the definition of degraded forest will vary enormously with the values held by individuals.

I was fascinated by a PhD abstract published in the *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of Australia* (34(3), September 2004). The thesis by Jason Cummings (University of New England) is titled ‘Ecological restoration of *Imperata cylindrica* grasslands and *Lantana camara* dominated *Eucalyptus grandis* plantations in Bongil Bongil National Park, north coast of NSW’. For those of you who are unaware, Bongil Bongil NP is the former Pine Creek State Forest, where a very large number of forestry students were introduced to north coast forests and the pioneering silvicultural research of Max (Doc) Jacobs, later continued by the excellent research of Ross Florence. This abstract describes experiments designed to restore sand mining sites and flooded gum plantations to their original species composition. It was interesting to find that wallaby browsing was discovered to be a problem when native species were planted! Thinning, slash burning and weed control were found to be useful in restoration and it seems possible that sales of the plantation trees can assist with the costs of such restoration. Enough said! Ross also states that current harvesting within State Forests raises problems of sustainability and the

adequacy of post-harvest treatment. This is a very real problem. The Regional Forest Agreements on the north coast never really proposed sustainable harvesting. Rather there is a reliance on private forests and development of plantation resources while a non-sustainable harvest of the forest continues in the short to mid-term. Of great concern is that the State Government legislation with respect to Integrated Forest Operations Approvals (IFOA) as applied to north coast forests restricts the gap size in harvesting to a maximum diameter 40 m. While this may be suitable for dry sclerophyll forests, such legislative restrictions make it virtually impossible to regenerate the wet forests such as flooded gum and tallowwood–blue gum. Such forests will probably change from their original composition and approach rainforest structure, unless a wild fire creates conditions for a return to the original species composition. In the meantime many will be pleased to see an artificial increase in the area of rainforest.

The editorial also mentions the occurrence of tree decline and dieback. Such decline is becoming a major issue in NSW and elsewhere and there is a need for intensive research into its causes and management. Ross also notes that the State Forests of NSW are a valuable resource because of the integration of timber production and biological conservation, and they require skilful sustainable management. It must also be remembered that sustainability is not guaranteed by passive management systems usually adopted in the National Park system. Monitoring for sustainability is just as essential in the reserve system as in those areas managed partially for wood production, and no doubt will be just as expensive. While I have considerable reservations about Parliamentary inquiries (again because different value systems influence the interpretation of scientific evidence), it is probably the only avenue left to see sensible management of all our forests for true multiple uses. Here’s hoping!

## Corrigendum

***Creiis lituratus* (Froggatt) (Hemiptera: Psyllidae): a new insect pest of *Eucalyptus dunnii* plantations in sub-tropical Australia**

Angus J. Carnegie and Paul Angel, *Australian Forestry* 68(1), 59–64

The authors wish to add the following to their paper:

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