

The Institute of Foresters of Australia

ABN 48 083 197 586



31 July 2008

Editor
Canberra Times

Dear Editor,

Misplaced comments about forestry in Tasmania and urban development in NSW in the Canberra Times article (Clearing our climate hurdle, Times2, 31 July 2008) distract from the science and evidence concerning land clearing in Australia and its impact on climate change.

According to the Canberra Times the "NSW Auditor-General's most recent report on land clearing in 2005 found ... about 30,000ha cleared illegally for farming, plantations and urban development." I read the 45-page report. It did not include the term "urban development" at all. It also found that no prosecutions for illegal clearing were successful when contested in court.

Fortunately for our forests, including those in Tasmania, we have a comprehensive and representative system of forest reserves that total over 22 million hectares. The timber products we all use may be harvested from about 9 million hectares of our public native forests. Only a fraction of that will actually ever be logged and all of it will always be forest. That compares with over 12 million hectares of wheat cropped in Australia each year.

The farming that enabled settlement of Australia was not possible without removing some of the original forests. We would all go hungry without the clearing McKellar was describing in her poem My Country.

Yours sincerely
Peter Langdon
Institute of Foresters of Australia
Media spokesperson, ACT Division

Note: The letter was published 4 August 2008 - the underlined sentence was not printed.