

Shane Phillips, chief executive of the Tribal Warrior Association in Redfern, emphasised to the committee how much of a difference mentors can make.

“Generational change is what we need. We are in a state of emergency. We cannot afford any more experiments,” he said.

“It’s really simple. We want to help people. We want people who have got some influence, who are worthy of trying to be a good mentor, help other people engage.”

Roy Smith is now working as a paid mentor for Tribal Warriors after overcoming a difficult childhood marred by alcoholism and violence.

He said he tries to show kids their past does not need to dictate their future.

“I try and bring a bit of pride into them about being an Indigenous person,” he said.

Redfern Police Local Area Command Superintendent Luke Freudenstein works closely with Mr Phillips and other Indigenous community leaders. He told the inquiry he has had considerable success in reducing robbery rates through a number of sports programs run by police with the help of organisations such as Tribal Warriors.

“We’re obviously in t-shirts and shorts and we just box with them, and they see us as people who care for them,” he said.

“We’re not just there to arrest them, or to move them on or search them.”

Shayne Neumann said he hoped the committee would make some strong recommendations in its report to parliament.

“We’re tough on juvenile crime but unfortunately when we do that we have a situation where more and more Indigenous youth and young adults are actually caught up in the system,” he said.

“So we’ve got to be tough on the causes of crime and not just on the crime itself and that’s coming through in the evidence.” •

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**GROWING DEMAND:** Forestry’s future in the spotlight. Photo: Thinkstock

## Forestry review welcomed

**A**ustralia’s peak forest industry body has welcomed a parliamentary inquiry into the long term options for the growth of and investment in Australian forestry.

Allan Hansard, CEO of the National Association of Forest Industries, said the inquiry provides an opportunity to refocus the industry.

“Australia’s forest policy framework is nearing the end of its shelf life,” Mr Hansard said.

“NAFI welcomes the terms of reference of the inquiry, including the analysis of the relationship between forestry and water resources and the industry’s ability to integrate with traditional agriculture in the landscape.

“Forests provide the essentials of life including renewable wood and paper products for shelter and other needs. On our current course, Australia will not have enough locally grown wood to meet our future needs. Australia’s growing population will require 7.1 million new dwellings and at least 64 million cubic metres of construction timber by 2050.”

The forestry review is being conducted by the House of Representatives Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry Committee.

Committee chair Dick Adams (Lyons, Tas) said the inquiry will assist in the future viability of the Australian forestry industry in the face of heightened environmental concerns and international competition in woodchips and paper milling.

“The industry is going through major change and Australia needs to change with it,” Mr Adams said.

“We need to ensure that innovation is being identified and supported, that

new ideas are accessible, and that the implications of change to the forestry industry upon communities and the economy are fully considered. We must get this right if we are to maintain an internationally competitive forestry sector.”

The inquiry will explore the social and economic impacts of the forestry industry, as well as current and future opportunities for industry development, diversification and innovation.

There will be a particular focus on models of investment, environmental issues, plantations, energy production, land use and farm forestry.

The committee will also investigate improvements in productivity and possible strategies to address the \$2.2 billion forestry trade deficit.

“Australia imports \$4.5 billion of forest and forest products, which is a big drain on our trade figures. We could improve that a lot,” Mr Adams said.

“The Australian community has a large and growing demand for forest products. We need to ensure that demand is being met in ways that are environmentally and economically sustainable, and beneficial to Australia.”

Education and skill levels will also be considered to ensure they match the employment requirements of the industry.

“I’m very conscious of making sure that we have enough foresters, with the changes to forestry that we do not lose the professional foresters, and that our training and academic levels are maintained,” Mr Adams said. •

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