



# **Coastwatchers**

***Eurobodalla's environment group***

Newsletter 15 October 2016

## **Coastwatchers Assoc. AGM Re-scheduled to Saturday 12 November 2016 at 2.00 pm at the Tomakin Hall, Tomakin**

Members were advised last Saturday that the AGM had to be postponed because of the 3-hour closure of the Clyde River Bridge. The Agenda remains unchanged, except for the date.

For those interested in the bridge closure look at:

[http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-08/batemans-bay-bridge-fixed-after-getting-stuck-for-hours/7915548?WT.ac=statenews\\_nsw](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-08/batemans-bay-bridge-fixed-after-getting-stuck-for-hours/7915548?WT.ac=statenews_nsw)

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The following article was published in 'The Age' on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The photos are Coastwatchers photos.

## **Native forests are worth more unlogged, so why are we still cutting them down?**

**By Caitlin Fitzsimmons - Editor of Money, The Age**

I spent the first four years of my life living in the middle of the forest in southeastern NSW. Our log cabin was at the end of a dirt road, surrounded by stringybark, spotted gum and the sounds of kookaburras and lyre birds. Wombat holes and lichen-covered boulders dotted the hillside and the creek ran cold and clear, steeped red-brown with tea tree.

After we moved to the city, we returned

most years to visit family. Every trip more and more of the surrounding bushland was cleared and replanted with radiata pine. Now most of the native forest near my childhood home is gone, clearfelled and sold to the Japanese for woodchip. It still upsets me greatly. As a child I blamed greed, but as an adult I realise the truth is even more galling, because there is nothing economically rational about it.

All Australians should be angry about logging of native forests. If you don't care about the environment, what about the fact your taxes prop up an unviable industry that employs very few people?

Now the bottom has fallen out of the woodchip market, you might finally think the gig is up. Instead there's a push to burn the forests and call it "renewable energy". In economics it is considered a market failure when damage to a third party or the



environment is not included in the cost. In the case of native forestry, taxpayers are actually paying for the destruction. Whether it's south-eastern NSW, East Gippsland in Victoria or the Tarkine in Tasmania, it's the same old story. Logging must be a front in the culture wars, because it sure ain't about economics.

The annual reports for the various state forestry businesses reveal logging native forests is marginally profitable at best, and a sinkhole for taxpayer money at worst. [Forestry NSW's 2015 annual report](#) boasts a "landmark result" because its hardwood division, mainly native forests, recorded an operating profit for the first time in 10 years. The corporation's overall profit was because of its substantial softwood plantation business, boosted by the housing boom.

[VicForests](#), which isn't in the plantation business, made a modest profit of \$4.7 million in the 2015 financial year, but this is not consistent across the state. In 2015 leaked documents revealed the [East Gippsland logging operations lost up to \\$5.5 million](#) a year.



Meanwhile, Forestry Tasmania went from being tens of millions of dollars in the red at the end of 2014 [to a profit the following year](#). But this was mainly because it decided its forests had gained \$37.9 million in value, then reported that as revenue. The profit also included \$14.4 million in direct government subsidy.

The Tasmanian Liberal government made an election promise to end \$95 million in subsidies to the logging industry, but it's struggling to follow through. On the very first day of the 2016 financial year it gave Forestry

Tasmania \$30 million to repay debt. The government claims this is not a subsidy because it comes in the form of an equity transfer from the state-owned electricity business.

Meanwhile, the Tasmanian government has called for projects using "forest waste" to generate electricity to apply for grants under its new Wood and Fibre Processing Innovation Program. There's \$1.25 million up for grabs and applications closed at the end of August.

Let's be clear – "forest waste" is not truly leftovers. It can sometimes be up to 80 per cent of the forest harvest. It gets worse. Thanks to the changes to the Renewable Energy Target, burning native forests can now count as renewable energy, even though it takes 80 years of regrowth to replace the carbon store.

And of course, Tasmania has plenty of clean hydro-power. The problem is especially politically vexed in that state because Tasmanians think the forestry industry is more important than it is. In fact, native forestry only generates about 1 per cent of the gross state product and provides 1000 jobs, less than 0.5 per cent of total employment for the state, according to a 2013 report for the Australia Institute.

Tasmania's tourism sector and aquaculture are worth far more in the long term, and both rely on the state's clean, green image.

By the way, the report was authored by Andrew Macintosh, the person appointed by the Abbott government to oversee the [Emissions Reduction Fund \(ERF\)](#). The truth is – and [Macintosh has written on this too](#) – native forests are worth more unlogged. Of course, forests are more than a number in a ledger, but even in pure economic terms you can assign value to forests' role in biodiversity, water quality and sequestering carbon.

One way for state forestry organisations to convert that to actual money would be to accept carbon credits from the federal government for not logging forests. This is payment for sequestering carbon under the ERF. It was set up in 2011, but still exists under the government's "Direct Action" plan, though it famously now includes payments to polluters to reduce emissions. Last year's [ERF white paper](#) explicitly states that local and state government entities can apply. There are already private landholders in Tasmania earning good money from the ERF for not logging their forests, but no state forestry corporations so far.

Forestry NSW mentioned it wanted to explore ERF possibilities in its annual report a year ago, but this has not yet eventuated. There's some speculation it wants credits for producing long-lived wood products rather than ending logging. Victoria offers a glimmer of hope.

[Last month the Forest Industry Taskforce](#), which includes groups such as The Wilderness Society and the CFMEU, requested a methodology for earning ERF credits.

The taskforce represents all Victorian state forests east of the Hume Highway, though the main focus has been on the Central Highlands because of the endangered Leadbeater's possum. If an ERF method is established, it could be valid nationally.

Let's hope common sense prevails.

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## **Report on the ESC's Coastal Environment Management Advisory Committee's Activities**

One of the more important Committees the Eurobodalla Shire Council has formed, is the Coastal Environment Management Advisory Committee. It was formed in 2009. But with new coastal legislation in place, the Committee's work has to be re-aligned to these changes.

Mrs Reina Hill, a member of Coastwatchers Management Committee, represents this Association on CEMAC. Two other Coastwatchers members are also members of CEMAC.

This Report is in two parts. First, recent activities of the NSW State Government, and second the activities of the Eurobodalla Shire Council.

### **(i) NSW State Government Reforms to Coastal Management**

#### *Coastal Management Act 2016*

The new Coastal Management Act 2016 outlines the NSW Government's vision for coastal management. It reflects the vital natural, social, cultural and economic values of our coastal areas and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development in managing these values. The Act passed through Parliament in May 2016, but may not be assented to until January 2017, when the new Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) is finalized.

#### *Coastal Management Manual*

The new Coastal Management Manual will include a synthesis of recent science relating to sea level rise and guidance on undertaking coastal and estuarine

erosion, and provide advice on inundation risk assessments. It will support Councils to identify and assess coastal hazards, including those associated with sea level rise. It will also consolidate a number of existing guidelines and fill any critical gaps that have been identified with Councils.

### ***Coastal Management SEPP***

The new Coastal Management State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) is due to be finalized when coastal areas are defined and should be released shortly.

The new Coastal Management Act divides the coastal zone into four coastal management areas. These four areas are defined by the unique features of different local areas.

The four areas are the:

- coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area;
- coastal vulnerability area;
- coastal environment area; and
- coastal use area.

The four areas are defined in the new Act and will be mapped as part of the new Coastal Management SEPP. This legislation will establish clear, outcome-orientated management objectives for each area to ensure Councils apply appropriate management tools and development controls.

### ***NSW Coastal Council***

The NSW Coastal Council will have an on-going function to commission technical or scientific reviews on matters such as sea level rise and provide advice to the Minister as required. It will form part of the best available scientific information for Councils to use to determine a sea level rise scenario to adopt for planning purposes

### ***NSW Government Support***

The NSW Government has committed support for local government with the technical advice they need to make credible balanced and sensible decisions and will be consistent with discussions with the Chief Scientist and Engineer. It will not prescribe state-wide sea level rise benchmarks, as decisions on associated risks need to consider local circumstances, including both the likelihood and consequences of sea level rise, the amount and type of development at risk and local social, economic and environmental factors, and will involve consultation with local communities.

The NSW Government will provide financial assistance of \$83.6m to Councils for coastal management over the next five years from 2016/17-2020/21. This includes \$69m of new funding and \$14.6m to be redirected from existing coastal management spending. The NSW Government has committed to a further \$5m each year following 2021 to continue to support for the coastal management framework.

## **(ii) Eurobodalla Shire Council Activities in Coastal Management**

### ***Eurobodalla Coastal Management Plan***

A Coastal Management Plan for the Eurobodalla will be prepared under the new State Government legislative arrangements and is due for completion in 2017.

The new NSW Coastal Management SEPP will be exhibited shortly. When that happens the new NSW Coastal Management Act will come into force.

The work already done by the Eurobodalla Shire Council, and that which will be undertaken in the future

will then need to align with the new NSW Coastal Management Reforms.

### ***Eurobodalla Shire Council Flood Studies***

In preparation for the Eurobodalla Coastal Management Plan, Council staff have already prepared a number of coastal flood studies and management plans. Details on the status of each estuary, will be provided in the next Newsletter

### ***Eurobodalla Shire Council***

Following the election of a new Council, Coastwatchers is interested to see if there is any attempt by the new Council to change the structure and procedures of CEMAC, or even oppose the State Government's coastal policies.

Some members of the local community, like others worldwide, have expressed adverse views regarding the big issues of global warming and sea level rise. In particular, some locals have criticized Council's Interim Sea Level Rise Policy. They believe the policy is too draconian and adversely affecting new development and coastal property values in locations identified by Council as being vulnerable to future inundation and flooding.

In reality, Council has little choice but to abide by state legislative requirements and align with the new NSW Coastal Management Reforms.

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## **NSW Coastal Council Vacancies**

Do you have the expertise to contribute to improved management of the NSW coastline? The NSW Government is inviting applications for membership on the NSW Coastal Council from those with the relevant technical knowledge and expertise in: coastal physical

sciences, including geomorphology; coastal engineering; coastal land use planning; coastal ecology; social science; economics; local government management; property law; dispute resolution; and traditional and contemporary Aboriginal use and management of the coastal zone.

The Coastal Council will provide independent advice to the Minister administering the *Coastal Management Act 2016* on coastal planning and management issues.

The Coastal Council will meet in Sydney as required, expected to be 6-8 times in the first year. Appointments to the Coastal Council are paid positions for an initial 18 month to 3 year term.

Members will be able to demonstrate capabilities to perform the following functions:

1. provide strategic advice to the Minister, including in relation to the Minister's functions under the *Coastal Management Act 2016*
2. assess compliance by local councils with management objectives and the coastal management manual in preparing and reviewing coastal management programs
3. conduct a performance audit of the implementation of a coastal management program of a local council
4. provide advice to a public authority on coastal management issues.

For further information please go to [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/coasts/coastreforms.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/coasts/coastreforms.htm).

To submit an expression of interest, please send a cover letter and resume to [coastal.reforms@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:coastal.reforms@environment.nsw.gov.au).

Applications close 31 October 2016.