

MEDIA ALERT: South Coast logging should immediately be halted and re-assessed following NRC Report into logging in bushfire impacted forests

The Friends of the Forest (Mogo), the Forest Working Group of the Coastwatchers Association and the Brooman State Forest Conservation Group are calling for logging in all active logging compartments to cease immediately in the Batemans Bay, Nowra, Narooma and Eden management zones. This follows the leaking of the Natural Resource Commission (NRC) report into bushfire affected forestry operations, which recommends significant restriction of forestry operations in fire damaged forests on the NSW south coast.

The NRC Report calls for a suspension of operations, stating logging should be stopped for three years in the Nowra and Narooma management zones, identified as posing an 'extreme risk' to environmental values. In the Batemans Bay and Eden Management Zones, identified as 'high risk', it also recommends 75% of the forest be protected through additional measures and restrictions for operations.

Nick Hopkins, Friends of the Forest Mogo, said:

"We need to tear up the existing harvest plans and re-write them so they align with the findings of the Natural Resource Commission. Surviving wildlife must have a chance to recover from the devastating Black Summer bushfires."

"We want to see forests in Nowra and Narooma immediately protected for 3 years and the targeted 75% of the forest saved by stopping logging in high risk active compartments now."

"Forestry and the EPA have been overseeing operations in 'high risk' bushfire affected forests where not enough forest has been set aside to meet this 75% target as the report has been kept secret. In practice, for example this would protect an extra 83 hectares in compartment 146 in Mogo State Forest being logged right now. This has meant these forests are being overlogged."

Takesa Frank, Brooman State Forest Conservation Group:

"The Brooman/ Shallow crossing community protected their homes, forest and businesses in the 2019/2020 bushfires. Not long after the fires, NSW Forestry began logging the burnt and unburnt parts of the Brooman and Shallow Crossing State Forest. Not only has this had a devastating impact on the environment including our wildlife, it has also impacted local businesses and community. The leaked NRC report reinforces

that logging in these fire damaged forests should not have continued.”

“We want protection of forests currently on the chopping block, not theoretical protection in areas that are not planned to be logged in the next 15 years.”

Joslyn van der Moolen Forest Working Group Coastwatchers Association:

“Private contractors have been logging steeply forested Currowan State Forest, west of the Kings Highway between Lyons Road and Western Distributor Road, from September 2021. Logging must stop at Currowan as to meet the target of 75% protected forest, an extra 115 hectares must be retained. Coastwatchers has also formally reported planned logging in this forest on slopes over 30 degrees, that is too steep to log, to the EPA.

“Logging contractors who need certainty, can turn to Cabinet, who have sat on this report for months, instead of taking this time to develop an Industry Plantation Plan.”

[1] NRC 2021, [Final Report: Coastal IFOA operations post 2019/20 wildfires](#), P.51

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[NRC Report Photos Drive](#)

Background information

FCNSW is currently logging Mogo State Forest compartment 146 without any of the additional measures recommended in this report for logging operations occurring in the Batemans Bay Management Zone. Compartment 146 is 174 hectares in total, but 127 hectares is being logged, meaning only 27% of the forest is retained. This is almost exactly the complete reverse ratio recommended by the NRC. If 75% is to be protected then only 44 hectares is to be logged and 130 hectares protected.

Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW) is also proposing logging operations in the Narooma Management Zone identified as extreme risk. Following this report, the operations being proposed in Bodalla and Dampier State Forests must now be immediately withdrawn [1].

NRC has recommended 75% retention of each Local Landscape Area in the Batemans Bay and Eden Management Zones. A Batemans Bay Forestry Corporation spokesperson advised a community member this week, they are “setting aside a minimum of 50% of the Local Landscape Area (LLA) as a temporary exclusion zone. LLA’s are ~1,500 hectare units of land that contain a number of compartments.” This protection falls significantly short of the NRC recommendations for 75% protection. Instead of protecting 1,125 ha per LLA, Forestry Corp is protecting only 750 hectares, a shortfall of 375 hectares which is about the size of a logging compartment for every local landscape area.

Compartment 212 located in Shallow Crossing State Forest in the Shoalhaven has just had 354 of the compartment’s total 572 hectares logged. If 75% of this forest was protected, only 115 hectares would have been logged. An extra 239 hectares has been overlogged. As logging has been happening since June, it is too late for the wildlife in the unburnt pockets of the 106 hectares that could have been saved if the report had been released at the start of the year.

In the next 12 months twenty logging compartments are planned to be logged between Batemans Bay and Ulladulla. Compartment 211A is the next area in the Shallow Crossing State Forest to be logged and is expected to start mid December. This compartment was burnt in the Black Summer fires and is yet to recover. Logging this compartment and Compartments 210, 209, 208 right down to the Clyde River is going to have massive impacts on our flora and fauna. This borders Bimberamala National Park with the iconic Mogo Lookout with unimpeded 360 degree views. Compartment 211A along with the other 19 compartments supposed to be logged in the next 12 months should cease after the leaked NRC recommendation to protect 75% of forest in this area of the NSW south coast.