



Coastwatchers

Eurobodalla's voice for nature

Legislative Council Inquiry into the long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry

4 June 2021 (extension granted on 28 May 2021 due date)

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Coastwatchers Background

The Coastwatchers' Association Incorporated (Coastwatchers) is a community organisation with close to one hundred members that has served the Eurobodalla region from South Durras to Mystery Bay on the South Coast of NSW for over 30 years.

Coastwatchers acting in close co-operation with residents, the wider community, the environment movement, the Environment Protection Agency, the Eurobodalla Shire Council and the NSW State Government aims to help protect the environmental health and beauty of this very special NSW South Coast region. The Association aims to raise awareness in the community of environmental and climate change issues.

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Coastwatchers endorses the following submissions

We are connected to the respective groups:

- National Parks Association's (we are a member group)
- Nature Conservation Council (we are a member group)
- South East Region Conservation Group (we are a member group) Harriet Swift author and Heather Kenway
- Friends of the Forest (Mogo)
- Margot Tallot
- Michelle Mitchell for SHASA and Parents for Climate Action

There will be more submissions from people in our district who value our Nature Coast for which tourism is our main employer.

Employment is in Tourism not Native Forest Logging

There is hardly any local employment in native forestry with only 100 employed on the south coast. We see Victorian contractors coming into our forests and their work of only a few months decimates local forested areas that tourists see on their way to tourism ventures such as the Berry Farm in Brooman State Forest or the private Shallow Crossing Campground. Local tourism operators have invested heavily in their properties on accommodation and other infrastructure for tourism.

Logging damages Ecotourism

Coastwatchers has been involved in campaigns to stop logging in these beautiful iconic locations as they are idyllic tourism locations.

- Logging of Buckenbowra State Forest next to 2.7km of the iconic Corn Trail in Monga NP
- Brou Lake in Bodalla State Forest next to Eurobodalla NP
- Shallow Crossing State Forest next to Bimberalla NP, sensational Mogood Lookout and Shallow Crossing private campground and outback experience drive through river crossing.
- Brooman State Forest logging of the Sheep Track which is now a devastated for kilometres for tourists visiting the Berry Farm. This business has also been advised the road will be closed for a year for upcoming logging.

Site Visit - Logging Closes Mountain Bike Trails

One example we can show you is the planned logging of Compartment 146 between Mogo Zoo and Deep Creek Dam. This area has a mountain bike trail through it that the NSW government will invest \$3 million and the council match 25%. Yet they plan to log it very soon.

The Joan of Arc informal mountain bike track was closed during logging Compartment 148 at Dunns Creek for months by forestry closing the forest. With no one using the track the ferns grew

back over a kilometre of the wet area and the track has since remained closed. So logging directly impacts on mountain bike trails.

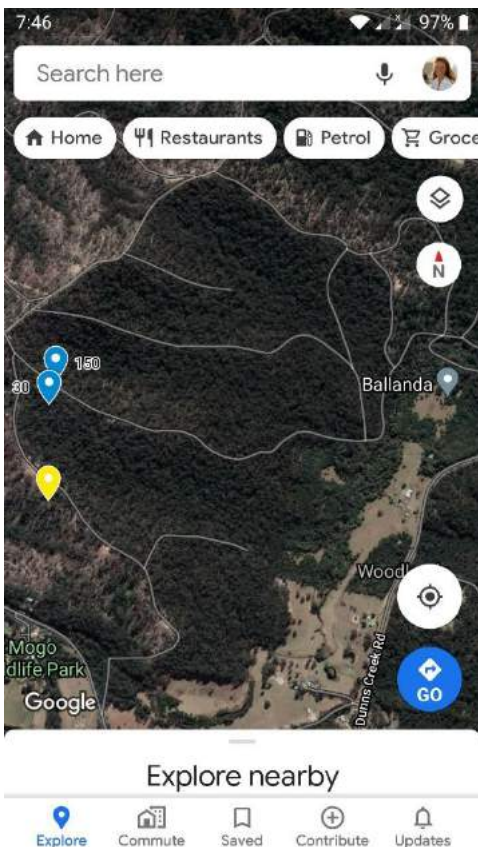
Pic Joan of Arc informal mountain bike track. Apart from logging across the track - heavy machinery churned up the ground and entire treetops were left all over the place.



Logging of Mogo State Forest used for mountain biking shows they are in direct conflict with each other as mountain bike tracks grow over when closed for many months in wet areas and are churned up on the ridges where the logging occurs.

Swift Parrots potentially driven to extinction by planned logging in Cpt 146 Mogo State Forest that has had half the population there

Below is a screen shot showing location of swift parrot records of 150 birds and 30 birds in the compartment both recorded by Chris from BLA. This is half of the remaining population yet this is planned for logging this year.



Risk to private and public sector investment due to the potential illegality of the native forest logging industry

This is evidenced by:

- Bunnings Victoria that owns Officeworks, no longer sourcing product from the native forest sector.
- The native forest sector being unable to attain FSC certification.
- The Friends of Leadbeater's case refuting the legality of the RFAs.
- Forestry resuming logging without EPA site specific conditions for bushfire affected operations ie here in Mogo State Forest. This article advises that the EPA warns Forestry Corporation of NSW it could face regulatory action after accusing it of walking away from negotiations.
17 Feb 2021 [Logging to resume in bushfire-affected forests on NSW south v despite environmental warning](#) The Guardian.
- The following samples from the Friends of the Forest (Mogo) submission of fines, stop work orders etc to show systematic non-compliance by contractors and Forestry Corporation indicating compliant forestry operations are not possible in native forest due to the complexity, terrain, and environmental considerations of a wild natural forest compared to forestry in a plantation

In March 2021 the EPA fined FCNSW for negligence in 3 of our local forests in 2019 in relation to Swift Parrot provisions. Refer to

- [https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/2021/epamedia210301-forestry-corporation-fined-\\$33k-for-failing-to-keep-records-endangering-parrots](https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/2021/epamedia210301-forestry-corporation-fined-$33k-for-failing-to-keep-records-endangering-parrots)

There are also these examples to cite but few:

- <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/2020/epamedia201008-epa-prosecutes-forestry-corporation-for-alleged-breaches-in-koala-exclusion-zones>
- <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/2020/epamedia200723-epa-orders-stop-work-on-forestry-operations-in-south-brooman-state-forest>
- <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/2020/epamedia200718-epa-orders-stop-work-on-forestry-operations-in-wild-cattle-creek-state-forest>
- [https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/2020/epamedia200427-forestry-corporation-fined-\\$31100-after-epa-investigation](https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/2020/epamedia200427-forestry-corporation-fined-$31100-after-epa-investigation)
- <https://www.nature.org.au/media-releases/2013/07/nsw-forestry-corporation-convicted-for-environmental-breaches-yet-again/>

Lack of Social License (from Friends of the Forest (Mogo) submission

- This industry-initiated survey of 2016 which showed even 5 years ago 65% of respondents found native forest logging unacceptable:

Economics - providing major public subsidies to the unprofitable native forest logging industry restricts growth of other regional industries and impedes the plantation sector

Heather Kenway's paper points out:

Providing major public subsidies to the inherently unprofitable native forest sector of the logging industry not only restricts the potential growth of other regional industries (recreation, hospitality, tourism, fishing, oyster growing, specialist crop growing, health and education services, etc) in the South East of NSW; it also impedes the growth and productivity of the plantation sector of the forestry industry.

- As far back as 2014 ANU forest economist Judith Ajani calculated that the Forestry Corporation's profits could have been 70% to 80% higher without the albatross of the native forest sector and that, because of the costs and market situation of the native forest sector, this situation could only worsen.
- Ajani stated that the public subsidies provided to the native forest sector of the industry would have been better spent on the plantation sector, to improve its productivity and capacity to provide material for the construction and other related industries. The native forest sector is essentially uncompetitive with plantations, hardwood and softwood, both domestically and in global markets. It also requires access to vastly more land than the plantation sector to produce an equivalent amount of wood - this also is a significant contribution to its cost.
- By 2013 the native forest yields per hectare were only half their previous level. Forty plus years of industrialised logging in the SE forests, mainly for low-value export woodchips, had reduced the capacity of the forests to provide wood: they were being cut much faster than they could regrow. Nonetheless the Forestry Corporation, backed by the NSW Government, continued to produce wood to meet contracted volumes.
- If the environmental and economic cases for exiting the native forest sector were strong before the 2019-20 bushfires, in the wake of the fires there are even stronger reasons for the government to move as quickly as possible to end this logging, put a good transition package in place for the workers and the region, and apply nature based solutions for restoration and management of the State forests.

Yours sincerely

Secretary

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The Association aims to protect the local environment, and preserve the integrity of the ecological systems of the South Coast of NSW and opposes the unnecessary destruction and degradation of natural systems, unbalanced development and pollution and threats to the survival of plant and animal species and communities.