

15 Bussell Crescent,
COOK. A.C.T. 2614

9th April, 1990

Mrs Ros Kelly,
Minister for the Environment,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Dear Mrs Kelly,

Firstly, congratulations on your appointment to the position of Minister for the environment. I trust that you will find the position interesting and rewarding.

I am writing to express my extreme dismay and concern, tinged with sadness at the destruction of the remaining stands of eucalypt forest on the escarpment of the S.E. region of N.S.W.

Last week-end I took a party of Year 12 Geography students to the Eden area as part of the Regional Geography unit we are studying in class. Amongst other activities we visited Duncan's Sawmill in Eden, Harris Daishowa woodchip mill at Twofold Bay and toured the forests with some guides from the Environment Network Office at Bega.

We listened to all the speakers and found their comments and opinions interesting and revealing. While appreciating the economics of felling the timber stands and understanding in part the reasons expressed for justifying their use there are many aspects about the issue that should override these factional interests.

1. Only 5% of Australia is now covered in native forests.
2. 73% of that forest is open to commercial exploitation. Precious areas of eucalypt forest in the South-east are under attack.
3. The forests are being used mainly for woodchips to send to Japan in spite of what the companies might say to the contrary. The Japanese have the very good sense to be preserving their own forests and vigorously revegetating so that now two thirds of the country with a population far in excess of ours is forested.
4. The forests are a complex ecosystem and a habitat for many endangered species as well as a genetic pool which is only just now being realized. The companies say that they log alternate coupes so that animals can move to the unlogged areas. That is not in fact what happens. The animals die because of the loss of habitat.
5. The roads that the companies are building in the forest are causing problems of siltation in nearby creeks as well as providing tracks for feral animals to infiltrate and subsequently destroy parts of the forest e.g. feral pigs.

6. The foresters say that time is given after logging for the forests to return to their natural state. This can never be the case when only a few trees, specifically for the woodchip industry, are left to be seed trees for the future. The undergrowth and middle storey becomes covered in a few acacia species and with weeds. One only has to go out into the logged areas to see this is the case. Many species are therefore lost for ever.

These are just some of the concerns that I have as a result of our trip to the forests to see for ourselves the case for and against logging.

I would like to recommend that as a matter of urgency you take a similar look at the area and view for yourself the devastation that is being inflicted on our forests there. I realize that many of the areas are not in National Parks or National Estate areas but I don't consider that is important when the forests should be preserved so that our children and grandchildren can view their beauty and majesty in time to come. It should be part of their heritage not ours to destroy. You are now in the position to do something about this matter. Please do not fail the future generations of Australia.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

(Mrs) Suzanne Bowman
Geography Teacher.