

Harriett Swift
Convenor
Chipstop Campaign
PO Box 797
Bega NSW 2550

Mr Daniel Tuan
Regional Manager
Forestry Corporation of NSW Batemans
Bay

Attention: Rob Young

Proposed logging in Bondi and Nalbaugh Forests koala habitat

I refer to the letter signed on your behalf by Rob Young dated 8th May 2013 regarding proposed forestry operations adjacent to Coolangubra Forest Way (Firebreak Construction) within Bondi and Nalbaugh SF. Forestry Corporation is seeking any additional information on Koala activities within these forests. You asked for information relating to the presence of the koala in the area to be logged.

The roadworks proposed appear to be for the purpose of facilitating further logging in the adjacent forests.

1. Koalas were once known to exist in this forest. While no recent records are apparently evident in Forestry Corporation documents, it should not be assumed there are no koalas present or that it might not again become valuable koala habitat in the future.

According to Forestry Corporation research* “extensive surveys are not able to identify localities from which koalas are absent [and] the assumption that a single survey can establish the absence of koalas from a particular locality appears to be inappropriate. “

It said: “koalas were scattered through the [Eden] region on various land tenures. The results suggest that conclusions regarding the distribution of koalas, based on previous records, may reflect uneven survey effort.”

The authors of this research were Forestry Officers who were instrumental in determining policy and practice towards koalas for many years. They also noted that significant cluster of koalas were found since 1988, at Tantawangalo–Yurammie and the Murrah area where the koala was previously believed to be extinct. It is therefore, they argued, dangerous to make any assumptions about the presence or absence of koalas on the basis of minimal, if any surveys and very little other knowledge.

2. Koala Fire trail. The existence of an old fire trail of this name strongly suggests that koalas were once present in Nalbaugh Forest. (see attachment A) This is very close to the designated area. I understand that its name has now changed and that it no longer appears on State Forest maps. However, the name – remembered clearly by conservationists who established a blockade (see attachment B) in the forest in the early 1990s strongly suggests that koalas were once common if not abundant in the forest. Using the approach adopted by Forestry Officers in their 2001 research, the apparent absence of koalas now does not justify any assumptions about whether koalas survive there or not.

3. Substantial pine plantations. Most of the length of Coolangubra Foresty has been cleared of the natural forest and more than half of it now consists of pine plantations. It is the scene of immense destruction, but is surrounded by natural forest, some of which may still be logged.

*“A playback survey of the koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, and a review of its distribution in the Eden Region of south-eastern New South Wales” Vic Jurskis, Alan Douch, Ken McCray and Jim Shields, State Forests of NSW, South East Region, PO Box 273, Eden NSW 2551, Australia. Revised manuscript received 18 September 2001.

** The same observation might now be made about Tanja State Forest.

This means that any natural forest remaining should be protected from further destruction. The presence of plantation pine does not detract from the value of the remaining natural forest of Bondi and Nalbaugh State Forests as koala habitat.

It is well known in the Central West Region that koalas are sometimes seen in pine plantations. I have even heard from WIRES*** carers in that district that pine needles have been found in koala scats.

4. Tanja State Forest precedent. I remind you that when Tanja State Forest was originally proposed for logging, surveys initially indicated no koala presence. It was only after protests and the sighting of a koala that further, more intensive surveys were undertaken. Those surveys resulted in the discovery of a significant new koala population. The same could well be the case with other forests such as Bondi and Nalbaugh, if further, more serious surveys were undertaken.

5. IFOAs under review. IFOA prescriptions for the koala on the South Coast are currently under review and are likely to be changed. In these circumstances it would be quite inappropriate to log any forests where koalas have historically been recorded.

6. No Harvest Plan exists. Because this logging is to be carried out as a road repair/ upgrade, there is no indication of how extensive it will be or what protocols, if any would be implemented to protect the koala. It is a general requirement in logging koala habitat that the logger must check a tree before he cuts it down. Leaving aside the general difficulty of seeing koalas in tall trees, that rule is not practical. It may have had some chance of being effective in the days of the chainsaw, but at the present time, when all logging is done by a mechanical harvester, there is no chance of the operator being able to see through the heavy steel plate roof of his machine to check whether there is a koala in the tree or not. Other workers on the site (usually 2) are also in no position to check on what animals are in the tree. For occupational health and safety reasons, they cannot stand close enough to the tree to have any chance of seeing a koala or anything else in the tree.

Recommendation: In the absence of any clear information on exactly where and how this logging is proposed, and because the area is historically koala habitat, I am requesting that Forestry Corporation does not proceed with this operation.

Coolangubra Forest Way is one of the most damaged areas of State Forest that I have seen in the south east and every tree counts.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

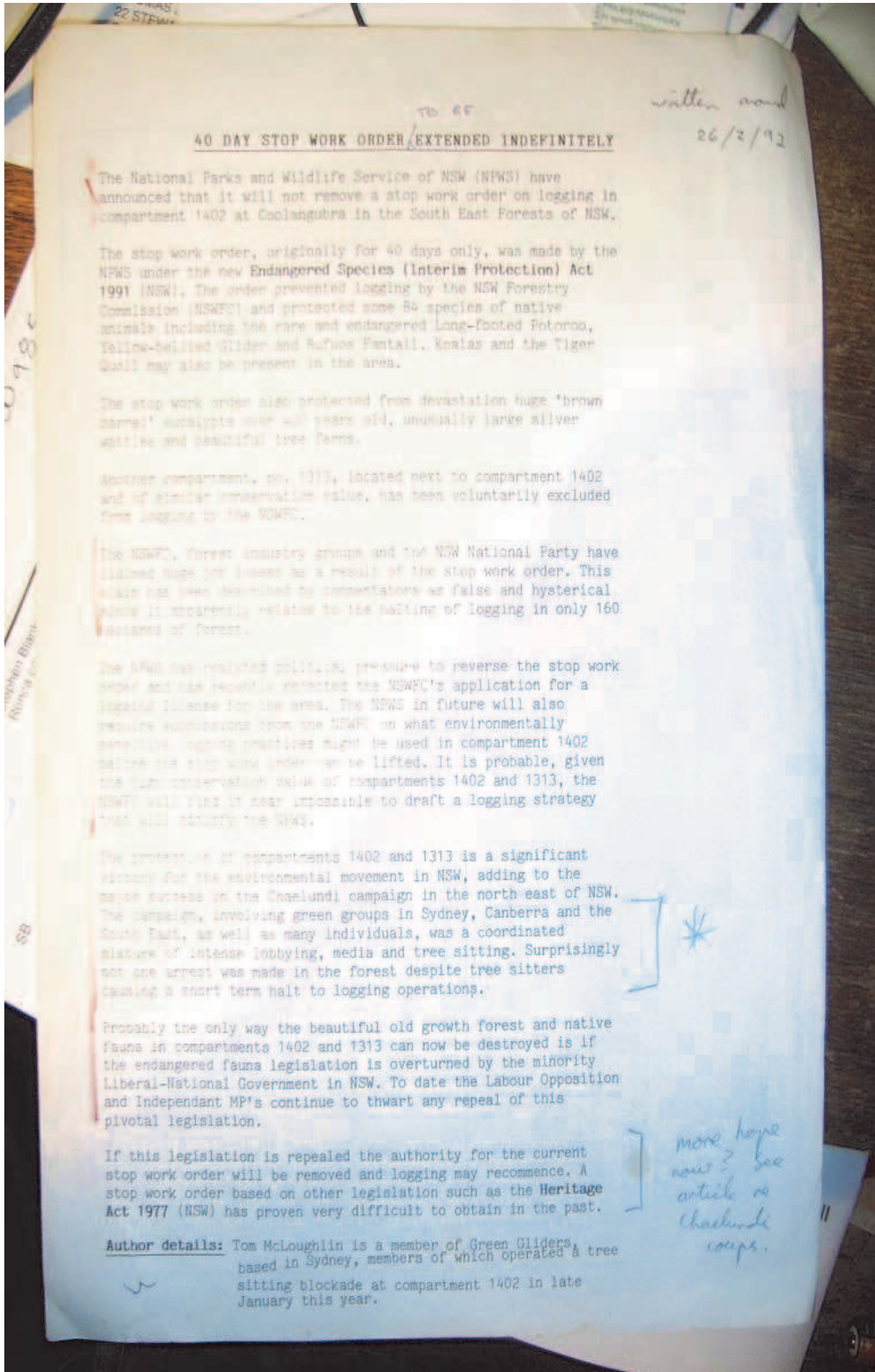
Harriett Swift

16 May 2013

*** NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc . <http://www.wires.org.au/>

Attachment A





TO BE

written now
26/2/92

40 DAY STOP WORK ORDER EXTENDED INDEFINITELY

The National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW (NPWS) have announced that it will not remove a stop work order on logging in compartment 1402 at Coalingubra in the South East Forests of NSW.

The stop work order, originally for 40 days only, was made by the NPWS under the new **Endangered Species (Interim Protection) Act 1991 (NSW)**. The order prevented logging by the NSW Forestry Commission (NSWFC) and protected some 84 species of native animals including the rare and endangered Long-footed Potoroo, Yellow-bellied Glider and Rufous Fantail. Koalas and the Tiger Quail may also be present in the area.

The stop work order also protected from devastation huge 'brown barrel' eucalypts over 400 years old, unusually large silver wattles and beautiful tree ferns.

Another compartment, no. 1313, located next to compartment 1402 and of similar conservation value, has been voluntarily excluded from logging by the NSWFC.

The NSWFC, forest industry groups and the NSW National Party have claimed huge job losses as a result of the stop work order. This claim has been described by commentators as false and hysterical since it apparently relates to the halting of logging in only 160 hectares of forest.

The NPWS has resisted political pressure to reverse the stop work order and has recently rejected the NSWFC's application for a logging license for the area. The NPWS in future will also require concessions from the NSWFC on what environmentally sensitive logging practices might be used in compartment 1402 before the stop work order can be lifted. It is probable, given the high conservation value of compartments 1402 and 1313, the NSWFC will find it near impossible to draft a logging strategy that will satisfy the NPWS.

The protection of compartments 1402 and 1313 is a significant victory for the environmental movement in NSW, adding to the major success in the Chaelundi campaign in the north east of NSW. The campaign, involving green groups in Sydney, Canberra and the South East, as well as many individuals, was a coordinated mixture of intense lobbying, media and tree sitting. Surprisingly not one arrest was made in the forest despite tree sitters causing a short term halt to logging operations.

Probably the only way the beautiful old growth forest and native fauna in compartments 1402 and 1313 can now be destroyed is if the endangered fauna legislation is overturned by the minority Liberal-National Government in NSW. To date the Labour Opposition and Independent MP's continue to thwart any repeal of this pivotal legislation.

If this legislation is repealed the authority for the current stop work order will be removed and logging may recommence. A stop work order based on other legislation such as the **Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)** has proven very difficult to obtain in the past.

Author details: Tom McLoughlin is a member of Green Gliders, based in Sydney, members of which operated a tree sitting blockade at compartment 1402 in late January this year.

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more hope now? see article re Chaelundi coup.