

MEDIA RELEASE:

Community Outrage at Logging in MOGO Without EPA Bushfire Rules

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Logging has been halted in Mogo State Forest today. An activist is perched on a tree top platform, 25m above the ground. Their platform is suspended from ropes that are connected to machinery.

This action is in response to industrial logging of South Coast forests despite EPA regulations meant to protect forests and wildlife after the devastating bushfires.

"Science shows that logging in burnt forests severely sets back the recovery time for these ecosystems," said Sean Burke from South East Regional Conservation Alliance. "To be logging in Mogo now is madness and we simply can't let it happen."

"We are taking this action today, to halt the destruction of this important habitat, which is critical for the wildlife that survived the fires. Many species, including the endangered Swift Parrot, are at risk if logging continues in these remaining native forests" said Miranda Gibson from Forest Defence NSW.

"Locals came to show support for the action as they are outraged at logging of swift parrot habitat following the ferocious fires the community has endured" said Joslyn van der Moolen from Friends of the Forest (Mogo).

"The EPA fined Forestry \$33,000 only two months ago for failing to put in environmental measures to protect swift parrots in Mogo State Forest," said Joslyn van der Moolen.

"With university research showing Swift Parrots number less than 300, it is criminal that logging starts in a compartment with swift parrot records," said Miranda Gibson.

"With 80% of the South Coast forests burnt in the bushfires the Government is still wasting the forests for woodchips and driving species into extinction," said Joslyn van der Moolen.

Professor David Lindenmayer from the Australian National University has said the fires should be used as a trigger to transition away from native forest logging and woodchipping.

"The combination of weak regulations, and the fact that citizens cannot take the Forestry Corporation to court has led to a situation where Forestry Corporation can ignore the EPA and the bushfire rules."

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has attempted to regulate Forestry Corporation NSW, given the state of the forests after the bushfires. However, Forestry Corporation have walked away, stating that it would not comply with the rules set up to protect forests. In turn, the EPA have said that they cannot regulate when they have no knowledge of what rules the Forestry Corporation are logging under. The Forestry Corporation resumed logging in fire-affected areas under a business-as-usual approach.

"We call on the government to step up to the plate and take action. Its time to put an end to native forest logging for us and our children's future," said David Ferraro from Canberra Forest Alliance.

Community members from conservation groups South East Region Conservation Alliance, Canberra Forest Alliance, Brooman State Forest Conservation Group, Friends of the Forest (Mogo), Forest Defence NSW and locals from the South Coast are taking part in today's action.

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For comment:

Joslyn van der Moolen – 0439 472 921 – Friends of the Forest Mogo

Miranda Gibson – 0414 535 164 – Forest Defense NSW

Sean Burke – 0411779571 - South East Conservation Regional Alliance

Takesa Frank – 0409700966 Brooman State Forest Conservation Group