



South East Region Conservation Alliance

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AUSTRALIA

The Hon Steve Whan
Minister for Primary Industries
Government of New South Wales

Dear Minister

Request for meeting in the South East, and invitation to a tour of logged areas

The South East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA) seeks a meeting with you to discuss the future of logging in the South East Forests, and invites you to visit the region for a tour of logging areas of particular concern to the conservation movement.

Recently on ABC South East Radio you stated that the notified breaches of License conditions imposed on Forests NSW as requirements under the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals for logging in the South East Forests were not of concern to you, that you are advised that they caused no environmental damage, and are fairly minor in nature. These breaches were notified to the Department of Climate Change, Environment and Water by South East Forest Rescue, a member of the South East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA).

Your position is at odds with the position put in an interview conducted by Tim Holt from the same station with Natasha Hammond-Deakin, lawyer from the Environment Defender's Office. Asked whether the breach reports were vexatious, she said she didn't think so, that the breach reports were incredibly detailed and backed with a lot of evidence. She said she was impressed with the work of the local conservation groups in providing specific information, with GPS coordinates for location, and photographic evidence. The rocky outcrops that were the subject of some of the reports were of international importance.

She mentioned that reports of 580 apprehended breaches had been notified to DECCW (and its predecessor departments) since 1999. Given the importance of conformity with License conditions, SERCA would suggest to you that this is indeed a large number of breaches, the cumulative effects of which are far from insignificant. Their sheer number would appear to indicate either indifference to doing what is necessary to ensure Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management, or that ESFM is indeed not achievable under current legislation and contractual commitments given the nature of the Australian forestry industry. SERCA has long held the view that the latter is in fact the case. We further understand that many hundreds of breaches have been reported in other NSW Regional Forest Agreement areas.

SERCA would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet you, in your new role as the Minister responsible for forestry policies and practices, to discuss the issues around these breach reports, and the future of forestry in the region. The developments in Tasmania and the subsequent public statements by the CFMEU that it sees no future for native forest logging and opposes burning timber for electricity, as well as changes in the Federal Government, suggest that such discussions with SERCA would be timely and to the advantage of your Government. We would like to suggest that this discussion should take place here in the South East, and include a tour of the logging areas, so that you can see for yourself what is concerning us.

We will contact your office to discuss possible arrangements.

Yours sincerely

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for the South East Region Conservation Alliance

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