

LETTER to Paul McLeay, Minister for Mineral and Forest Resources, Minister for Ports and Waterways, and Minister for the Illawarra:

From: dankatz83@hotmail.com
To: office@mcleay.minister.nsw.gov.au
Subject: Please spare our forests
Date: Fri, 25 Jun 2010 05:25:45 +0000

Dear Minister,

If I have this right and you have taken Ian McDonald's portfolio, I hope you will be more conscientious, courageous, and wise than he was. At least there is one thing we know: You can't be worse.

I won't belabour the arguments for ceasing to treat our native forests as a source of wood for human consumption. Scientists pretty well agree that forests, particularly native forests, are one of the best forms of carbon storage. Most scientists also say that dense forests help combat drought.

Besides the overwhelming scientific arguments for preserving our native forests, the wildlife and the beauty of the trees themselves are compelling reasons to save what is left. In a recent international survey, 80% of overseas tourists choosing Australia as a favourite destination did so primarily because of 'the wilderness experience.' Our beaches and cities are lovely, but not unique. Koalas and wallabies and kookaburras in the wild are unique.

Greenies and people making their livings through tourism are not the only people affected by native forest logging. The recent illegal logging of a compartment in Mumbulla Forest desecrated an Aboriginal burial site. Oyster farmers are about to have their livelihoods threatened by scheduled logging near Bermagui. A whole town's water supply is threatened with upcoming logging near Wyndham.

As far as jobs in the timber industry and the need for timber resources go, we've been this route before. Whaling used to provide many jobs and many products. People adapted, and transferred their skills to other industries. Other sources are used to make what whale byproducts were used for. If anyone has the courage and foresight to stop the destruction of our native forests, we will adapt again. Besides plantation wood, there are other methods of making paper. We are also doing a lot of things electronically that used to take paper. Most timber workers are skilled. They operate heavy machinery or drive trucks or check soil. There is a call for their skills, whether it be on timber plantations, driving freight trucks, working for national parks, or other endeavors.

I know there are RFA's. I know you are one person, whose job scope doesn't include stopping native forest logging. I know you can look at the propaganda and say the Department of Forestry is actually helping the forests. The problem is, Nature doesn't care what spin people put on things. If we continue to flaunt the common sense of climate change and species preservation, we won't have beaches, we won't have forests, we won't have tourists, we won't have farms -- but I guess we can still sell wood chips, at a loss.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours, Dan Katz 16 Edna Drive Tathra, NSW 2550 02-6494-5887