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Mr Daniel Tuan
Regional Manager
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Attention: Shane Clohesy

Proposed logging in Glenbog State Forest koala habitat

I refer to the letter signed on your behalf by Shane Clohesy dated 22nd May 2013 regarding logging of koala habitat in Glenbog State Forest. Forestry Corporation is seeking information on koala activity within these forests.

1. Koalas have been recorded in this forest. According to the Wildlife Atlas and anecdotal reports from local residents, koalas have been sighted in Glenbog State Forest, on both sides of the highway, in adjacent forests of South East Forests National Park, Glen Allen State Forest and private property.

While no very recent records are apparently evident in Forestry Corporation documents, has anyone looked for koalas there?

According to Forestry Corporation research¹ “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 clusters 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.

¹ “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

2. Glenbog is currently being logged, much of it has already been heavily logged and regeneration has been problematic. I presume that the compartments to be logged are 2329, 2320 and 2335. Attachment A shows scenes of logging in Compartment 2353, very close to the compartments to be logged. There is no mention of possible koala presence in the Harvest Plan for that compartment. The Harvest Plan for 2354 simply states that there are no koala records. How do you know there are no koalas there in any of these compartments? Have you looked? The records that do exist are along roadsides, especially the busier roads. I do not think it is adequate to dismiss the possibility of koalas being there so lightly. And even if there really are none there now, who is to say they may not find that forest a suitable home in the future if they are to recover to the numbers that once existed?

3. Tanja State Forest precedent. I remind you that when Tanja State Forest was originally proposed for logging, surveys initially showed 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 Glenbog, if further, more serious surveys were undertaken.

4. IFOAs under review. I understand that 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.

The current prescriptions are unworkable. 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.

5. Glenbog has been heavily logged and has not regenerated satisfactorily. Even woodchipping industry representatives such as Mr Peter Mitchell, South East Fibre Exports General Manager have advocated replanting logged forest on the escarpment because the cold climate and absence of a forest canopy kills off seedling trees. There is no justification for logging koala habitat, especially when it will not regenerate.

Recommendation: Because the area is historically koala habitat, I am requesting that Forestry Corporation does not proceed with this operation. Glenbog State Forest is one of the most heavily areas of forest in the region and we cannot afford to lose more of it, with or without koalas.
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Harriett Swift". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'i'.

Harriett Swift

3 June 2013

Attachment A



Current logging in Glenbog State Forest May 2013

