



Our reference: MD14/6209

Dr Bronte Somerset  
bjsomerset@gmail.com

Dear Dr Somerset

I refer to your email to the Minister for the Environment, Rob Stokes MP, regarding logging operations in Glenbog State Forest and impacts on the area's wombats. Your email was referred to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and I have been asked to reply.

I would like to acknowledge upfront your ongoing interest in native forest matters and your engagement with the EPA. I appreciate your commitment and the effort you put into raising these important matters, including providing a link to the online video you made. I have viewed this video and have also passed the link onto my staff.

I would also like to assure you that the EPA has been actively working with the community and Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) to protect wombats and their burrows in Glenbog State Forest.

Local community members contacted the EPA about wombat habitat in compartments 2311 and 2321 of the Glenbog State Forest before logging started in June 2014. Based on this information, the EPA engaged with FCNSW ahead of harvesting and received a FCNSW commitment that damage to wombat burrows would be avoided. This included ensuring burrow entrances did not collapse and remained unobstructed by logging debris.

FCNSW also committed to restricting the movement of haulage vehicles to daylight hours to help minimise risks to wombats. FCNSW were also provided with Wildlife Rescue South Coast's contact details and instructions for harvesting operators in the event that injured wildlife was found.

EPA officers inspected FCNSW logging operations in Glenbog State Forest in July 2014. This inspection identified many burrows that had been protected. This work also identified a small number of burrows that had been impacted and FCNSW were requested to clear blocked, or partly-blocked burrow entrances.

Based on these field observations, the EPA also provided FCNSW with recommendations about how to better protect wombat burrows in the harvest area. This included careful planning, construction and use of log dumps and haulage roads. I understand these recommendations were adopted and implemented.

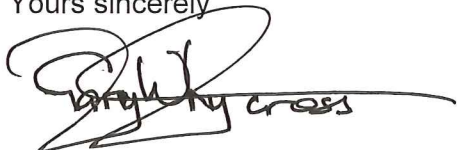
Following the initial discussions with members of the local community, EPA officers also worked with local residents to identify and mark wombat burrows in areas that had not yet been assessed or logged. As noted in your video, over 150 burrows have been identified in compartments 2311 and 2321 of Glenbog State Forest. I can confirm more than 80 of these burrows are in areas protected from logging through landscape exclusion zones. A number of these identified burrows are also in areas that remain unlogged.

I understand logging in Glenbog State Forest has finished for the time being and the EPA has planned a thorough site inspection of the area in the near future.

A prime focus of this work will be whether the identified and mapped wombat burrows have been protected. The EPA will also use this opportunity to again meet with local community members and get feedback about our compliance findings. I would also welcome any information you would like to contribute to this planned inspection.

If you have any further questions about these matters, or wish to discuss the EPA's upcoming inspection, please contact Steve Hartley, the EPAs Principal Manager Forestry on 9995 6703.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Whytcross', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

9 October 2014.

**GARY WHYTCROSS**  
Director South  
Environment Protection Authority