

MEDIA RELEASE – 13th September 2009

What a welcome Bermagui holiday makers will receive this summer when they arrive at the northern gateway to the Australian Coastal Wilderness!

Not the most accessible temperate forests in the world but a bared, hot, parched and lifeless landscape behind a fringe of trees.

Why do Forests New South Wales have all the power? No matter what recommendations scientists at Department of Environment make, no matter what representations conservation groups like SERCA make or oyster growers or fishing or Tourism, the loggers get their way.

Politicians are scared of timber interests – they still shudder to think of Mark Latham verses timber workers in Tasmania - yet the polls as always show that 77% of people want native forest logging stopped.

According to Forests NSW, the Bermagui trees to be logged are only sixty years old but the evidence from the logdump taken on Sunday after the logging started shows logging has concentrated on trees much older than that patches of these forests have been heavily logged before and they and the dependant plants and animals are struggling to hang on as regrowing trees suck up critical water. This is part of a critical and narrow habitat corridor between the ocean and farmland and feeding grounds for Swift Parrots, the dwindling koala population and other threatened species as well as the many other species not yet considered threatened but which require hollows and healthy forests for their long term survival. Logging kills individual animals immediately and when the rotation times between intensive logging is much shorter than will allow for the development of hollows then entire species will eventually cop it.

While you still can, take the Spotted Gum Road, stop at Black Lagoon, a Marine Park, beyond which you can see the scared mountain, Gulaga. Look at a map and see the critical creek lines that should be feeding this Marine Park.

I am amazed that State Forests fails to see the beauty of these spotted gum forests and recognise their potential as a botanical garden, surely a more appropriate entrance to this Coastal Wilderness.

I am also amazed that the State Government does not stop the degradation and recognise forests as essential to stop climate change: through carbon sequestration, critical water catchments and the beauty of a diverse wildlife for adaption to global warming.

Prue Acton - SERCA Spokesperson