



Coastwatchers

Eurobodalla's voice for nature

5 November 2021

Open Letter to Eurobodalla Business Chambers - Protest Mountain Bike State Forest

Dear Batemans Bay, Mogo, Moruya, Narooma Business Chambers and Ministers and Shadow Ministers for Tourism and Environment

Coastwatchers is writing to appeal to the business community to call for the protection of the local spotted gum public forests that contain both the existing and planned Mogo and Narooma mountain bike hubs.

As part of Mogo's economic recovery, \$8 million has been pledged for a nationally significant Mogo Adventure Trails Hub. Of this taxpayer money, \$750,000 is Eurobodalla Shire Council ratepayer funding. Another \$8 million has been pledged for mountain bike trails in Bodalla State Forest.

This investment in eco-tourism is essential as the Eurobodalla Shire is an important visitor destination on the south coast of NSW, welcoming 1.2 million visitors per year. Domestic visitor nights in 2019/20 numbered 2,001,422. More recently Mogo was a hot finalist in the 2021 NSW tourism awards. Local jobs directly supported by tourism, number 1,425 with another 850 tourism jobs indirectly supported.

Mogo and Bodalla State Forests could be flagship destinations for forest based recreational activities. However, the state forests that existing and planned mountain bike trails are located in, are being logged by the state based NSW Forestry Corporation. On Friday 5 November 2021 Forestry changed the status of the Mogo State Forest Compartment 146 to active. This compartment is bordered by Dog Trap Road and Mitchell's Road and is just up the hill from Mogo tourist village.

The Kona mountain bike Trail, linking the Vietnam Trail in Dunns Creek with the Mitchell Road Trail, is in this forest. The new trail is planned to go through the spotted gum forest adjacent to Dog Trap Road. The [harvest plan map](#) shows these trails will be logged with the trails closed for months, heavy machinery churning up the tracks and treetops left all over the hillsides as occurred in Mogo Compartment 180 earlier this year along Maulbrooks Road and Dunns Creek in 2019.

The Coastwatchers Association Inc.

PO Box 521

Batemans Bay NSW 2536

ABN 66 003 550 939

contact@coastwatchers.org.au

www.coastwatchers.org.au

Like us on [Facebook](#)



Caption: Mogo Compartment 180 logging in 2021 - view from mountain bike trail.

Local business chambers with a vested interest in a thriving economy, can work with the Ministers for Tourism and the Environment to ensure these public forests containing these mountain bike trails are not logged. These forests are public land owned by the people of NSW. NSW Forestry Corporation staff simply arrange access to the private sector to cut down trees, with returns so low, that the plantation sector pays for native forestry operational costs.

Mogo State Forest compartment 146 is 174 hectares in total and with a return to the NSW Forestry Corporation of only \$128 per hectare (20c per tree) this totals only \$22,784. Will this be even enough to compensate for this week's grading of the dirt Dog Trap Road which will need to be redone after it's all over?

We must not allow any more logging of these natural assets that we are using to attract mountain bike riders from around the country.

Eurobodalla has over 106,000 hectares of state forest comprising one third of the shire. If logging of NSW public state forests ceases as has been announced in WA and Victoria, these public forests could be used for regional recreation to take the pressure off fire damaged national parks.

Furthermore, the carbon sink created from keeping the trees standing in the 106,462 hectares of state forest in the Eurobodalla and 140,480 hectares of state forest Bega Valley Shire, would negate all of both shire's carbon emissions from transport, electricity, waste and agriculture. Over 440,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide are emitted from these sectors in the Eurobodalla (494,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide in the Bega Valley Shire) each year. See [Zero SE Forest Fact sheet](#). When native forests are logged, most of the carbon stored in these trees is released as the treetops are left on the forest floor then burnt and the logging is primarily for export woodchips and firewood.

Instead of logging public native forests, the state based NSW Forestry Corporation could work with the private sector to develop a Forestry Industry Plan to transition fully to plantations on marginal agricultural land. Plantations are efficient, uncontroversial, devoid of threatened species and profitable with operations paying local council rates.

Logging Mogo State Forest Compartment 146, will only provide work for two or three people (the harvesting machine operator, skidder operator and the truck driver) for a few months. These private operators already work in pine plantations. Let's get organised so they work in plantations all of the time.

In 2020, an East Gippsland contractor logged Compartment 59 in South Brooman, north of Batemans Bay. Other logging in Eurobodalla usually has Eden based contractors with overseas origins. These examples challenge the myth that logging provides local jobs. Eurobodalla locals want to keep our forests intact for local eco-tourism that generates jobs in hospitality, track construction and maintenance, bicycle sales and repairs, not to mention protection and observation of threatened species through activities like commercial spotlighting and guided bushwalks.

This will also address road safety as locals are currently at serious risk from dodging loaded logging trucks on blind corners on dirt roads. Tourists visiting our coastal villages including Mogo have to negotiate loaded logging trucks when they cross the street.

Our volunteer work has already saved almost eight hectares of Dunns Creek State Forest in 2019, four hectares near unofficial Pear Tree Lane and a ten metre buffer along several kilometres of the bicentenary funded walking track from Annett Street in Mogo. After Mogo State Forest Compartment 146 is logged, the only state forest left on the beachside of Mogo village will be what volunteers have saved.

Surely the clout of the combined business community can save the forests that mountain bike trails riders depend upon. Let's get these forests listed as a forest preserved area under state forest protection for regional use to underpin this \$16 million eco-tourism investment.

Regards

Joslyn van der Moolen, Nick Hopkins, Lois Padgham
Coastwatchers Association Incorporated - Forest Working Group
0439 472 921m
PO Box 521 Batemans Bay NSW 2536
www.coastwatchers.org.au
Like us on [Facebook](#)

[https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/latest-news/2021/mountain-bikers-to-ride-high,-\\$5m-grant](https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/latest-news/2021/mountain-bikers-to-ride-high,-$5m-grant)

Email List:

richard@smadar.com.au Mogo Business Chamber
chamber@moruya.nsw.au
contact@baychamber.com.au

secretary@narooma.org.au

Minister for Tourism Stuart Ayres on penrith@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Matt Kean Minister for Energy and the Environment office@kean.minister.nsw.gov.au

Shadow Minister for Tourism, David Harris, wyong@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Shadow Minister for the Environment and Heritage Penny Sharpe

penny.sharpe@parliament.nsw.gov.au

cc:

State member for Bega - Andrew Constance bega@parliament.nsw.gov.au

NSW Shadow Leader Chris Minns, kogarah@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Regional NSW Mick Veitch,

mick.veitch@parliament.nsw.gov.au

ride@rockytrailentertainment.com

info@dirtart.com.au

info@batemansbaycycles.com.au

mail@moruyabicycles.com.au

sales@bikewrench.com.au

bookings@southboundescapes.com