

16 July 2009

Mr Nick Roberts  
Chief Executive Officer  
Forests NSW  
PO Box 100  
BEECROFT NSW 2119

cc Hon Nathan Rees MP, Hon Ian Macdonald MLC

Dear Mr Roberts,

Thank you for your letter of 1<sup>st</sup> May in response to my emails to the Premier which were sent to the Hon Ian Macdonald who asked you to respond to me on his behalf.

Whilst I consider your arguments about how the forests are being managed, I think about what I see in this area and also consider the arguments of the people who live here. Whilst they may not necessarily vote 'Green', the 'greens' in the community are growing in support of retaining our forests and they don't like what they see either. We cringe when we see a laden logging truck hurtle down the Princes Highway bound for the Eden chip mill, its load either to be sold to Japan or to be burned (as proposed) as bio fuel. We witnessed logging in the Bermagui area last year and the removal of thousands of trees. We drive along roads and see new tree growth and burrawang palms in neat order. We don't see old growth trees. We don't see rotting rambling vegetation and the type of undergrowth, leaf litter, fungi, ferns, fallen logs alive with organisms and the richness visible in mature forest areas. We know that the old growth trees provide shelter and foliage for wildlife. We see the highly endangered Swift parrot foraging here and we wonder why forests in Bermagui are to be logged again when it was logged in 2008 and 2009. Why is logging recurring so soon in this area? Why does one company hold a monopoly on 'wood' for export or burning in this area?

Then it occurred to me that **nothing that commonsense already tells us matters** when it comes to protecting the natural native forests of SE NSW. A lack of action by people who could stop forest logging, demonstrates that none of the following facts seem to be given credence beyond perhaps the classroom or the lecture theatre, or the discussions of people who really care about what is happening to our forests.

- Australia is the driest populated continent on earth with the fewest trees. Scientific evidence points to the damage we are doing to our environment by logging natural native forests. Topsoil in logged forest runs off in rain or blows away in wind and all that is left are areas of infertile soil which lack humus.
- Young trees growing where forests have been logged use up more water than old forests. Old growth forests retain water and are essential for the natural rain making cycle involving transpiration.
- Studies show that old growth forests of SE NSW are among the best carbon storers in the world and are worth more in the ground as carbon storers than as woodchips. Once cut down, a tree releases carbon into the atmosphere – the carbon bank is lost.
- Permission given to log natural native forests did not take climatic change into account and as we are experiencing rapid climate change, this decision needs review.
- We have sufficient timber plantations for our own domestic use. Local communities support that the forests remain – we do not stand to gain monetarily from protecting the forests. Our only agenda is that they be permitted to cycle and recycle themselves as nature intended.
- 2,500 – 3 000 logs a day enter the Eden chip mill to be chipped and sold to Japan or burnt for bio fuel. There is a growing 8 story high stockpile of woodchips at Eden. It is common knowledge that the Japanese have reduced their intake and the mill is about to burn one of this country's best natural resources for a lot less than it is worth left in the ground as carbon storage.
- Logging in the SE coast area has been carried out since the 1920s. Logged forests produce spindly trees which are too young to provide tree homes for wildlife thus logging destroys natural habitat for fauna and supports their extinction. Local surveys show that only 30 koalas were left in the Mumbulla forest in SE NSW. Surveys by Bega High School students proved that koalas inhabit Bermagui forests which are again earmarked for logging. The near extinct unique Swift parrot which

breeds in Tasmania has been sighted in far south coast spotted gum forests on its northern migration: "We found them feeding on the spotted gum blossoms of the coastal forests. Logging of the spotted gum forest at Bermagui is scheduled to start again soon. It's not enough to protect their Tasmanian forests. They need to eat when they on their northern migration too". A birdwatcher, July 2009.



Some issues raised in your letter to me:

- You said that only the waste heads, butts and branches are used for woodchips. I have never seen a truck heading for Eden carrying a head, a butt or a branch but thousands of trunks are taken to the chip mill daily. I believe that chipmill machinery cannot handle branches, butts and heads, only trunks. Perhaps what you are being told happens during logging activities may not be the truth. (Pls. see attached photos as evidence of waste logs and butts left after recent logging at Bermagui).
- You state that logging is good for forests. That seems to me to be like saying, gouging out areas of coral reefs is good for the reefs. How did the forests survive before Australian settlement? How they were then was **PERFECT**.
- I have never seen a 'thinning' operation – only areas stripped bare. It seems incongruous that the smaller trees are taken so that the bigger ones can grow faster only to be taken anyway. It is still destruction no matter how carefully one orchestrates it and you have made no mention of whether you replant to replace the logged trees.
- You mention 'environmental audits'. Are these performed independently post-logging to see whether what you think is happening to the forests after logging actually happens? If so, could I please have a recent report pertaining to the SE NSW area?
- You didn't mention wildlife. Who or what protects them? Am I especially naive? Do the loggers pluck wildlife to safety before the trees are felled? Leave the nested trees standing? Are environmental impact studies undertaken by independent bodies to determine the distribution of wildlife in areas earmarked for logging? Who would condone the act of a person killing dozens of koalas in the Cumberland Forest? It is a ludicrous thought, but that is the same as what is happening in the forests of SE NSW. Frankly, we try very hard not to become too distressed.

#### **WE DESPERATELY NEED THE NSW GOVT TO PUT A MORATORIUM ON ALL LOGGING IN SE NSW.**

As a conservationist, you need to come and see what is happening here: stand on the highway and count the trucks per day and the number of tree trunks they carry, talk to the people, find out what happens from people who have no fiscal or political interest in the forests – but who just want to save them. We could organise a tour for you to see where logging has been carried out. I have enclosed an invitation for you to attend a Forum being held in Merimbula on 1<sup>st</sup> August at 12.30 pm where you could meet people for whom the protection of the forests is of great importance. You would be made most welcome.

The natural native forests are our pleasure grounds. We walk through them, seek out natural phenomena and observe their beauty.

Human subtlety will never devise an invention more beautiful, more simple or more direct than does Nature, because in her inventions, nothing is lacking and nothing superfluous.

Leonardo da Vinci

Your sincerely,

Dr Bronte Somerset

In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences. Robert Ingersoll.

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We read that you get \$6M to manage NSW forests. We see above how the forests are treated for that money:  
the forest at Buckenbowra March 09, remains of a habituated tree and remains of a large carbon storer.  
We were told "no koalas in Mumbulla" yet, below, one sighted there prior to logging . . . .

