

Statement for Media: FOREST DEFENDERS WIN COURT CHANGE

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Eleven far south coast residents charged with about 30 offences under the Forestry Regulations arising from their efforts to stop koala habitat logging in Mumbulla Forest have succeeded in their bid to move their cases to Bega Court.

Forests NSW had sought to force the 11 defendants to travel to Parramatta Court to defend the charges.

“Some Sydney residents defending similar charges have been forced to travel to Bega to attend court.”

Spokesperson for the defendants, Ms Harriett Swift accused Forests NSW of acting in a high handed way.

“We live on the far south coast, Mumbulla Forest is on the far south coast and all the forestry witnesses live and work on the far south coast.”

“To expect us all to travel to Sydney, possibly up to 3 times each is unfair.”

“I am convinced that the idea was to add to the inconvenience and costs for defendants, witnesses and thus add to the penalties we will suffer if we are found guilty.”

“We have perfectly good local courts right here and trying to force us to go to Sydney like this was totally uncalled for.”

A magistrate in Parramatta today agreed to transfer the cases to Bega where they are now listed for 23rd November 2010.

1 November 2010

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Harriett Swift