



Far South Coast Branch National Parks Association (NSW)

Tuesday 1st March 2016

**MEDIA RELEASE:
SOUTH EAST STATE FORESTS FLORAL RESERVE**

The Far South Coast Branch of the National Parks Association welcomes the creation of new flora reserves between Tathra and Bermagui and the cessation of timber harvesting within the Murrah, Mumbulla, Tanja and southern part of Bermagui State Forests and congratulates the NSW Government on the decision.

These areas have significant cultural and biological values that have seen strong community actions for decades in the form of logging protests and citizen science monitoring of koala habitats.

Pressures on koala populations are a national issue and the addition of 12 000 ha of flora reserves to the coastal state forests will be an important contribution to the viability of the remnant population of far south coast koalas.

However, the FSC branch expresses disappointment that the overall logging quota has not been reduced, as this will only shift the pressures on to other native forest areas. Koalas are not the only species under pressure. In the Environment Minister's press release, mention is made of 25 other threatened species. Threatened species depending on bio diverse habitats and hollows (formed in old growth trees) will still be under pressure from continued logging.

It's time for the loss making and unsustainable hardwood logging of native forests to stop. The NSW Government should not be giving more money to the industry. With the coming expiration of Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) it is time to start the transition of native forests from an extraction industry into a more ecologically sound reserve for wildlife and carbon storage.

The announcement today could have been one of great significance if it had heralded the end of logging in native forests. The new flora reserves could have been valued additions to a much wider plan for connectivity to build resilience into our natural environment.

The FSC NPA branch has been working on a proposal for the *Great Southern Forest* that aims to restore connectivity to our native forests, give greater protection to endangered species and put these valued places to better use as a benefit for the wider community.

The profound threats of climate change and efficient overseas eucalypt plantations were not significant factors when the RFAs were drafted. They are now. These are significant economic and environmental changes that any responsible governments must address.

David Gallan
President

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Vice-President