

# Murrah Flora Reserves Draft Working Plan - Public consultation

Feedback from Seán Burke, PO Box 2105, CENTRAL TILBA NSW 2546

Firstly, congratulations on the dedication of this Flora Reserve and the development of the Draft Working Plan. I would also like to express my disappointment that the reserve wasn't added into Biamanga National Park in the first instance and am pleased that this is an ideal expressed in the draft plan.

Whilst I'm at it, I'm also very disappointed that this plan is open to feedback from stakeholders at a time when the Gulaga and Biamanga National Park Boards of Management are suspended due to errors within the Park service and they are not able to provide input.

I'm impressed with the values, description, history and current usage sections so the following comments relate to the rest of the draft plan. I'm also very impressed with the research that has been undertaken and continues on koala presence and habitat rehabilitation to ensure their survival if at all possible. Acknowledgement that past logging has had a negative impact on both flora and fauna is most welcome, contrary to the bullshit currently being distributed regarding renewal of the Regional Forest Agreements.

The management objectives are admirable, particularly the adaptive management principles provided that sufficient time is provided for long-term measures to determine their effectiveness. Whilst I support most of the management actions, I have concerns about the following areas:

- I'm concerned that insufficient attention seems to have been given to the impact of weeds, pest animals and bell miner associated dieback. I believe that further work is needed in these areas and they should be included in the plan.
- I found the section on fire confusing and believe that it could do with some work. Whilst I understand the results of the Phoenix simulator options and the choice made, it seems that the concept of cultural mosaic or small patch cool burns hasn't been incorporated into the fire regimes, particularly in the SFAZ zones. These SFAZ areas are very important as future habitat areas and they shouldn't be sacrificed to big fires, erosion and loss of habitat trees to protect other areas – they can also be cool burnt with sufficient resources. There is also no indication of a recommended size for these cultural burns which I believe should be a part of the plan. I also believe that extra funding needs to be put into developing and resourcing cultural burning that is truly low intensity mosaic burning rather than RFS type hazard reduction hot burns with Aboriginal people present that is called "cultural burning" and this should be included in the plan. I certainly hope that the Fire Management Strategy to be incorporated into the BVSC Bush Fire Risk Management Plan is clear in this regard and if not it should be clearly stated in both documents.
- I believe that the native plant and native animal lists at Appendices 1 and 2 are incomplete and need further investigation. I understand that there are species across the four old State Forests that haven't been identified in all their places

and species that are present in many of these forests haven't been identified at all, including various species of snake and white headed and top knot pigeons. I'm sure there are quite a few more that need to be included and I recommend that the plan include further research into all the plant and animal species present within the reserve.

- I also believe that the part of Bermagui State Forest located north of Bermagui River that was omitted from the Reserve should be included. This area is critical to re-establishing the connecting habitat corridor to areas north of that where koalas were plentiful many years ago. Koalas require an extensive range and rehabilitating these links would give them a better chance of survival.

Finally, I would like to express my dismay with the unnecessary donation by the NSW government as part of this arrangement of over \$2.5million to the logging industry from the Environment Fund to compensate them for lost revenue from having to acquire their timber from sources further north. This is an absolutely ridiculous proposal where timber for pulp from around Batemans Bay attracts a royalty of less than \$5.00 per tonne whereas that which would have been extracted from the newly dedicated Murrumbidgee Flora Reserve would have cost the Eden Chipmill over \$17.00 per tonne. Please ensure that these disgusting subsidies are paid for sawlogs only.

The Environment Fund should be used for programs that enhance environmental recovery, not those that actually destroy it.

Yours sincerely,

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