

13 Pacific Drive
Bermagui
NSW 2546

1/04/09

The Hon. Peter Garrett A.M., M.P.
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600.

Dear Minister,

I was pleased to see you on a recent 7.30 Report (16th August) voicing your commitment to strengthening the National Reserve System.

Being a member of the Gulaga and a deputy for Biamanga Boards of Management and having been a professional ecologist before retirement I am extremely concerned by the way in which the forests adjoining the two Parks are being managed.

Between Gulaga and Biamanga National Parks lies an area of forest which should form a corridor and habitat for wildlife between the Parks, a catchment for wetlands and rivers, and a store of carbon. It is also the link between two culturally highly significant Aboriginal sacred sites and embraces ancient pathways between the two. Flocks of the endangered Swift Parrot recently used it as a drought and fire refuge for winter feeding.

This forest, the Bermagui State Forest, is currently under the Eden RFA and being harvested by Forests NSW which has already logged two compartments between the Cobargo Road and the Bermagui River and is about to log three more to the north. One of the latter surrounds Black Lagoon, which is a protected zone in Batemans Marine Park and another is in the catchment of Long Swamp, a wetland important for birdlife.

It is no exaggeration to say that most of what is being logged is iconic Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*) forest with an understorey of Burrawang (*Macrozamia communis*). It was logged in the past, and has not

yet had time to fully develop nesting hollows, but any further logging will not only extract more trees with this potential but further interrupt the movement of organisms across the landscape. Post-logging burning clears large areas of forest floor habitat.

Appeals to the State Government have only elicited rote replies referring to the RFA as being the unbreachable and ideal guideline for the operations. As your draft review of the EPBC Act points out, there are many doubts about the environmental outcomes of the RFAs. A glaring example of this is the still-burning fire that escaped from a hazard reduction burn by Forests NSW on Gulaga's northern boundary and swept through the Park, possibly entering the Pinkwood rainforest, unique in its southernmost distribution.

Action by the Commonwealth would seem to be the only way to halt this environmental vandalism. Bermagui State Forest is too precious to suffer the fate of many of the natural ecosystems of the Far South East. It forms the northern approach to the Commonwealth-initiated Wilderness Coast and is much appreciated for its beauty by visitors and locals, 150 of whom rallied against the logging in the forest last weekend.

As a very concerned citizen, I appeal to you to do whatever is in your power to reserve this vital corridor for future generations.

Your faithfully,

Dane Wimbush