

An open letter to Ian Macdonald, Minister for Primary Industries Lois Katz, 02.06.10

Dear Mr Macdonald,

Why is the NSW Government is so committed to propping up the native forest logging industry? This industry is so poorly managed that it lost \$14 million in the last financial year. This information can be found on the Audit Office's website www.audit.nsw.gov.au.

The Auditor-General, Mr Peter Achterstratt, wrote: "I can only see this loss increasing as Forest NSW continues to look for new sources of hardwood timber and the costs of harvest and haulage increase..." He took Forestry to task when he wrote: "To meet supply commitments, native forest managed by Forests NSW on the north coast is being cut faster than it is growing back." This audit shows that logging native forests is not sustainable. Record numbers of trucks were counted carrying native timber through Bega this past spring. Forestry is over-logging and still can't pay its bills.

Of course people need jobs and we must keep the economy going as best we can. The tax money that is being given to Forestry could be used to help timber workers financially while they are retraining so that they can support their families and not suffer.

Solar power companies are starting up and the recycling of bottles and cans and electrical parts of old televisions and computers are new green industries. These people could use a helping hand to get going. Timber workers could be employed in any of these businesses or in truly sustainable jobs in eco-tourism.

There is a disturbingly cosy relationship between Forestry NSW and our state government. This government has been in too long and is too intertwined with Forestry.

Ironically, Minister Carmel Tebbutt has recently launched a \$1.23 million plan to help koala numbers recover in NSW. An area near Bega that was once heavily populated by koalas before extensive logging is still being logged. The koalas, the few that are left, will not survive if logging is allowed to continue there.

Stop the destruction now. Save what native forests we have left.

Yours truly,

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