

**LETTER: TO MS ROBYN PARKER MP, MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND MINISTER FOR HERITAGE. SEAN BURKE.  
14.08.2012**

Dear Minister,

I wish to register my ardent objection to proposals by Forests NSW to log compartments in Tanja State Forest where evidence of recent koala habitation has been discovered.

The forests at Tanja have been selectively logged for sawlogs in the past and only a very small number of koalas have survived these operations. This remnant population is genetically pure and identifiable as a distinct original genotype that has not been degraded by inbreeding. Plans to undertake integrated operations within these compartments and adjacent forests will undoubtedly ensure their extinction.

Given that \$2,827,100.00 was recently allocated from the Biodiversity Fund towards returning koalas to the Bega Valley plus another \$1,935,000.00 for Forests NSW to protect koala habitat, is it sensible to destroy the known habitat of the only koalas detected so far in the Bega River catchment?

I was appalled when an unnamed spokesperson for Forests NSW was recently quoted in the Bega District News as saying "the principal (sic) purpose of the logging at Tanja is to supply sawlogs (1,200 cu metres)...to Blue Ridge Hardwoods sawmill in Eden". If this is true, why will 6,000 tonnes of the trees harvested be sent to Nippon Paper's South East Fibre Exports to be woodchipped? In an industry where 90-95% of the harvest is unnecessary "waste", the other 5-10% sent to sawmills is no longer the primary purpose of the business. The Federal Government tells us that woodchips "are also produced as a by-product from thinning production forests, timber harvesting and saw-milling" but they are quite obviously no longer a by-product of timber harvesting.

I also understand that due to reduced markets for woodchips on the international stage, South East Fibre Exports are now stockpiling their supplies where they are left outside to degrade. I believe that they have also instigated mill closures as they can no longer sell the stock they have. So why are Forests NSW allowing a further 6,000 tonnes to be taken from these compartments when they are not required by the mill?

Surely this remnant population of rare koala species should come before a dying industry and I call on you to do everything you can to ensure this madness is stopped before irreparable damage is done to these vulnerable creatures and our special places here on the south coast of NSW.

With thanks,  
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