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Mr Shane Clohesy
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Attention: Melanie Dyne

Proposed logging in Glenbog State Forest koala habitat Cpt 2341, 2342, 2343, 2345, 2346

I refer to the letter signed dated 5th January 2018 regarding logging of koala habitat in Glenbog State Forest. Forestry Corporation is seeking information on koala activity within these forests.

1. Koalas have been recorded in this forest. According to the Wildlife Atlas and anecdotal reports from local residents, koalas have been sighted in Glenbog State Forest, on both sides of the highway, in adjacent forests of South East Forests National Park, Glen Allen State Forest and private property.

While no very recent records are apparently evident in Forestry Corporation documents, has anyone looked for koalas there?

According to Forestry Corporation research¹ “extensive surveys are not able to identify localities from which koalas are absent [and] the assumption that a single survey can establish the absence of koalas from a particular locality appears to be inappropriate.” It said: “koalas were scattered through the [Eden] region on various land tenures. The results suggest that conclusions regarding the distribution of koalas, based on previous records, may reflect uneven survey effort.”

The authors of this research were Forestry Officers who were instrumental in determining policy and practice towards koalas for many years. They also noted that significant clusters of koalas were found since 1988, at Tantawangalo–Yurammie and the Murrah area where the koala was previously believed to be extinct. It is therefore, they argued, dangerous to make any assumptions about the presence or absence of koalas on the basis of minimal, if any surveys and very little other knowledge.

2. Tanja State Forest precedent.

I remind you that when Tanja State Forest was originally proposed for logging, surveys initially showed no koala presence. It was only after protests and the sighting of a koala that further, more intensive surveys were undertaken. Those surveys resulted in the discovery of a significant new koala population. The same could well be the case with other forests such as Glenbog, if further, more serious surveys were undertaken.

3. IFOAs under review.

¹ “A playback survey of the koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, and a review of its distribution in the Eden Region of south-eastern New South Wales” Vic Jurskis, Alan Douch, Ken McCray and Jim Shields, State Forests of NSW, South East Region, PO Box 273, Eden NSW 2551, Australia. Revised manuscript received 18 September 2001

The future of IFOA prescriptions for the koala on the South Coast is unclear and they are likely to be changed. In these circumstances it would be quite inappropriate to log any forests where koalas have historically been recorded.

The current prescriptions are unworkable. It is a general requirement in logging koala habitat that the logger must check a tree before he cuts it down. Leaving aside the general difficulty of seeing koalas in tall trees, that rule is not practical. It may have had some chance of being effective in the days of the chainsaw, but at the present time, when all logging is done by a mechanical harvester, there is no chance of the operator being able to see through the heavy steel plate roof of his machine to check whether there is a koala in the tree or not. Other workers on the site (usually 2) are also in no position to check on what animals are in the tree. For occupational health and safety reasons, they cannot stand close enough to the tree to have any chance of seeing a koala or anything else in the tree.

4. Glenbog has been heavily logged and has not regenerated satisfactorily.

The Review of the Regional Forest Agreement² tells us that only about 70% of logged forest has effectively regenerated. That is unsustainable. In colder climate forests such as Glenbog, it is probably worse. The Even woodchipping industry representatives such as Mr Peter Mitchell, then South East Fibre Exports General Manager have advocated replanting logged forest on the escarpment because the cold climate and absence of a forest canopy kills off seedling trees. There is no justification for logging koala habitat, especially when it will not regenerate.

Recommendation: Because the area is historically koala habitat, I am requesting that Forestry Corporation applies the Precautionary Principle and does not proceed with this operation.

Glenbog State Forest is one of the most heavily areas of forest in the region and we cannot afford to lose more of it, with or without koalas.

Yours sincerely



Harriett Swift
20 January 2018

² NSW Regional Forest Agreements - A report on progress with implementation of the New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements. Table 27 , page 162.