

MEDIA RELEASE: 15/09/2009 – ARREST OF CAMPAIGNERS

Two leading forest campaigners were arrested on Monday afternoon. Previously South East Forest Rescue and a Friends of Five Forests representative conducted an inspection of critical Koala habitat in Compartment 2002 of Bermagui State Forest.

Not more than fifty metres from the shores of Black Lagoon, a Sanctuary zone and part of Wallaga lake Batemans Marine Park, a Forests NSW logging operation has commenced. This is contrary to recommendations from expert consultants, local residents and green groups that forests in the area should be expertly managed for koalas.

“Destroying Koala habitat on the only soil landscape known to support koalas is unacceptable, particularly when the NSW government cannot prove their claims that koalas can be found anywhere in the south east,” said Mr. Robert Bertram, local Friends of Five Forests member.

“This is yet another example of Forests NSW lack of care for community and the environment,” said Ms Lisa Stone, spokesperson for South East Forest Rescue. “They are logging Old-growth in Dampier, Threatened Species habitat in South Brooman, Endangered Species habitat in Nadgee and now this.”

“The loss of biodiversity coupled with logging and burning means the condition of many forests is as bad as the endangered ecological communities on private land, unable to support most threatened and endangered species and unable to recover.”

“We urge the newly appointed Minister for the Environment, Mr John Robertson, to step in on behalf of the native forests and their dependents and stop these archaic practices.”

The current government policy of destroying habitat to satisfy ‘wood supply agreements’ is robbing from the future generations their chance of survival.

The campaigners were parked on the Princes Highway in Tilba, observing fire bombing techniques on Gulaga Mountain, more than ten kilometres from the Compartment and two hours after leaving the inspection site, when arrested.

(end)

For more information please contact 0437471763. Tony Whan.