

MEDIA RELEASE

Forestry Corp may undermine increased protections for Tanja Koalas.

Friends of Chinnock 14th February 2013

Intensive logging of Tanja Forest, already postponed on three occasions, may still go ahead despite the recent discovery of a new Koala population in the forest late last year.

Changes to logging Protections for Koalas on the far south coast are being negotiated between Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW), the Office of Environment and Heritage and the EPA.

"Locals have learned that the Department of Environment and Heritage have recommended extending Koala exclusion zones to incorporate all new Koala communities and the strengthening of prescriptions for logging in Koala habitat." Friends of Chinnock spokesperson Jamie Shaw said today.

"FCNSW confirm that negotiations on Koala prescriptions will start in mid March." Mr Shaw said. "However, FNSW has twice failed to give the local community any assurances that Forest Corp will maintain existing protections."

Logging in Tanja Forest was postponed last year after a new community of Koalas was discovered in a logging area. Since then further DOE&H surveys indicate the region's Koala population is expanding for the first time in nearly a century.

"This may indicate a recovery for this fragile Koala population." Mr Shaw said. "Yet, at this crucial moment, we fear the NSW Government, under pressure to honor unsustainable and possibly suspect wood supply agreements, may ignore DOE&H recommendations and undermine already inadequate protections in an attempt to wood-chip Tanja Forest despite the Koalas presence."

"Intensive logging around an area containing Koalas would be a tragic mistake." Mr Shaw went on to say. "We call on all parties in continuing negotiation to hold firm, strengthen existing protections for the far south coast Koalas, and instigate comprehensive independent studies on the extent of the Koala recovery, to provide recommendations to preserve the population and unoccupied habitat in the long-term."

"With over 750 signatures on an online petition (<http://www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/save-the-tanja-forest-koalas-from-woodchipping>) the Federal and NSW governments must act on public concern, extend logging exclusion zones and strengthen prescriptions, to save the Tanja Koalas from destructive woodchip logging." Mr Shaw concluded.

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