

# bronte j somerset

---

27 June 2011

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications  
PO Box 6100 Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600 Australia  
[ec.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:ec.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Sir or Madam:

Submission for:

**Inquiry into the status, health and sustainability of Australia's koala population:  
THE SOUTH EAST FORESTS OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Since recently moving to the South East part of New South Wales, I have observed logging activities and reflected upon their impact on the natural environment in which few koalas live.

This submission includes:

1. Recent activity by ForestsNSW (FNSW) in the Bermagui State Forest
  2. A pictorial display of the end result of logging activities in the SE NSW's State Forests over the past few years.
1. In May 2011, FNSW sent a letter, which they presumably considered to be 'consultation', to residents of Bermagui, NSW (p.2). It indicated that logging would occur in several compartments within a few kilometers the village. They are required by law to consult with environmental groups, residents, Indigenous groups and an animal welfare group. None of these groups has been consulted regarding this year's logging.

FNSW acknowledged that koalas were in the area and asked for residents to advise if they had 'any further information' regarding their whereabouts. A local lady told me "that they say this so that they can kill them before logging ... this has being going on for years". The map on page 3 shows one logging compartment's proximity to known koala habitats.

This month, a FNSW forester based at Batemans Bay, communicated with me that he had dropped incendiary bombs from a helicopter onto the foothills of Gulaga to destroy 'dangerous leaf litter'. They were pingpong balls containing condies crystals and, once injected with glycol ethylene burst into flames when hitting the ground. What chance would koalas have in this situation?

These activities do not ensure a safe habitat for koalas. For this and other very significant environmental and economic considerations, **I recommend that the logging of native forests should cease immediately.**



**FORESTS NSW**  
ABN 43 141 857 013

2 Crown St (PO Box 42) Batemans Bay NSW 2536

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests T 4475 1400 F 02 4472 6557



Your reference

Our reference **Neigh\_Millard\_2001\_2002**

27 May 2011



**Re: Notification of Timber Harvesting  
Compartment 2001 & 2002, Bermagui State Forest**

Forests NSW, Southern Region is currently planning to harvest Compartment 2001 & 2002, Bermagui State Forest which is located within close proximity to your property Lot 193, DP 752130.

The location of Compartment 2001 & 2002 in respect to your property is shown on the attached map.

The harvesting activity is scheduled to commence in the third quarter of 2011 and will continue over a 6 month period. During active harvesting, timber haulage will be via Cobargo – Bermagui Road.



Database searches show that Koalas have been detected around the area. If you have any additional information in regards to Koalas in this area please contact Andrew Kemsley on the contact number listed below within 14 days of the date of this letter.

Following harvesting (usually in the Autumn-Winter months), a top disposal burn may be carried out within the compartments to reduce fuel loads and promote regeneration weather permitting. Firebreaks will be upgraded as part of the harvesting activity to ensure fire does not enter your property. If you have any concerns regarding burning please contact Rob Young on (02) 6496 8809. Further information can be provided closer to the scheduled burn if required.

Should you have any queries regarding the harvesting activity, please do not hesitate to contact Andrew Kemsley on 64968814.

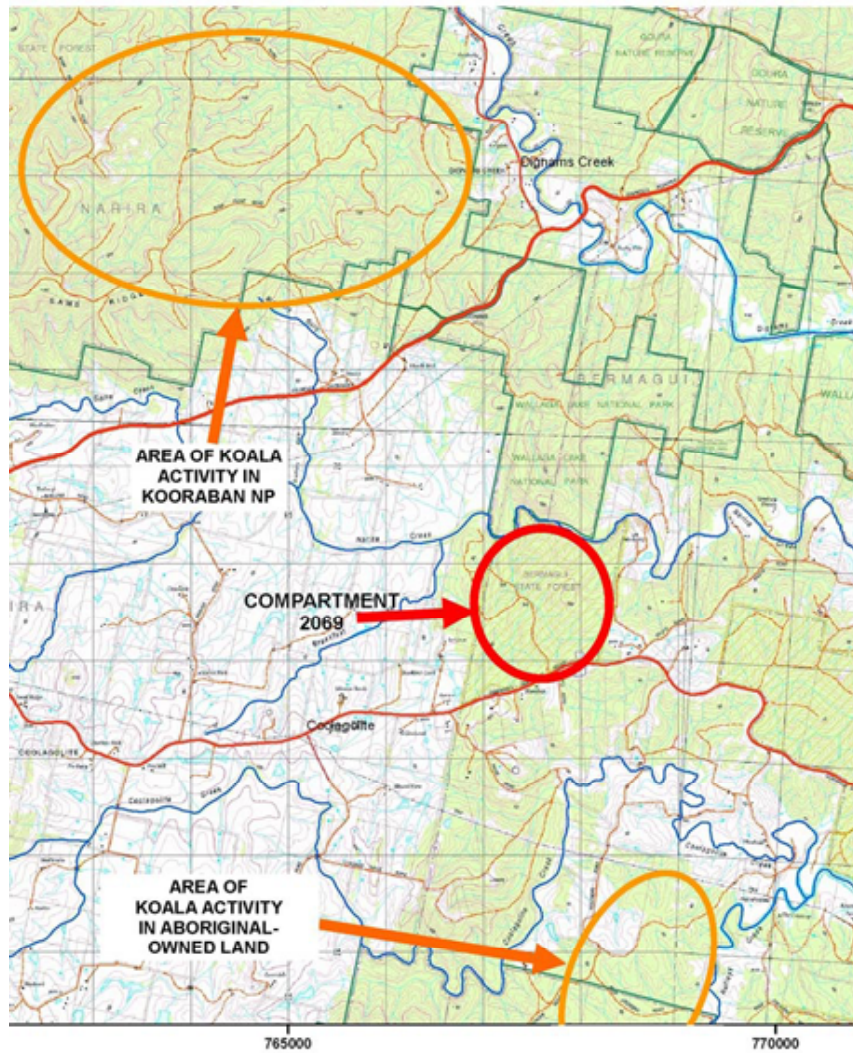
Yours sincerely

**Andrew Kemsley**  
For: DANIEL TUAN  
REGIONAL MANAGER

Forests NSW is a public trading enterprise within Industry & Investment NSW

MAP SHOWING LOCATIONS OF RECENTLY CONFIRMED AREAS OF KOALA ACTIVITY (ORANGE CIRCLES) AND COMPARTMENT 2069.

**THIS COMPARTMENT IS SCHEDULED FOR LOGGING**



2. The following photographs demonstrate activities which have created an impossible situation for koalas and their habitat in the south east forests of NSW.<sup>1</sup>

FROM THIS



TO THIS



AND THIS



**Bermagui State Forest, 2009: post logging burn**

The 'felling fields' look like eco-terrorism war zones. While I cannot claim to have an in depth scientific knowledge about koalas and their habits and habitat requirements, it seems obvious that the opportunities, which these pictures convey for their health and sustainability, are negligible.

---

<sup>1</sup> I took most of these photographs



**Gnupa State Forest, 2009:** FNSW acknowledges this was a 'mistake'.



**Gulaga (Mt Dromadery), 2009:** on fire due to foresters' carelessness.



Clear felling near **Mogo**, 2009



**Buckenbowra State Forest, 2009**



**Mumbulla State Forest, 2010:** illegally logged as it is Aboriginal sacred ground and koalas had been sighted there.



This shows an area to be logged, on Wallaga Lake Road 2ks from Bermagui Village. Old growth trees were clear-felled years ago and only their huge stumps remain. These spotty gums are quite young and need to be left to develop the beneficial qualities of old growth trees. The canopy is sparse and further canopy destruction by imminent logging will ensure continued inhabitability for koalas.



The children of the future send their message at **Mumbulla State Forest**, 2010. I spoke to these children and their Mother. They said that the forest was their playground as they lived next to it and now it is badly damaged.

When one compares FNSW's logging practices with what is written by people like David Suzuki and what is presented in government commissioned reports such as 'The Critical Decade' by Prof Will Steffen<sup>2</sup> and the recent Garnaut Reports<sup>3</sup>, the disparity is enormous. Ignoring the intelligence and life-long commitment to the environment by such scientists and environmentalists and by treating the opinions of Australian citizens who have a genuine love and respect for the world around us as 'chaff in the wind', has the potential to render koalas extinct.

It seems to me that the forests of SE NSW are suffering from one catastrophe after another. Each time I see a (non-plantation<sup>4</sup>) logging truck on the road I think of all the habitats that have been lost for birds, animals and other forest creatures. It truly is a disastrous situation and I am lost for logical reason as to why these rapacious logging practices are allowed to continue.

Bronte Somerset, EdD

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://climatecommission.gov.au/topics/the-critical-decade/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.garnautreview.org.au/update-2011/garnaut-review-2011.html>

<sup>4</sup> Plantation logs are generally of uniform length and smaller girth