

EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

PUBLIC FORUM

All members of the community who have registered have been advised that they have a **maximum of seven minutes** to put their case.

Ordinary Meeting of Council on **23 March 2021**

| Name | Subject/Comments |
|------------------------------|---|
| Public Forum – 9.30am | |
| Alison Worthington | GMR21/011 NSW Government Funding for Community and Economic Resilience - Growing Local Economies Fund |

Submission to ESC meeting 23rd March 2021 by Alison Worthington

Good morning Councillors.

I'd like to acknowledge that we meet on the lands of the Walbanga people. I pay my respects,

I thank them for their continuing care of land and waters here,

and acknowledge that sovereignty of these lands and waters was never ceded.

I would like to comment on agenda item GMR21/011 NSW GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE - GROWING LOCAL ECONOMIES FUND.

Congratulations to all who have worked on the business case and the Masterplan proposal for this exciting project, aimed at making Mogo a hub for mountain bike riders across the country and, sooner or later, from across the globe. It is stated in the meeting agenda that this plan aligns with the NSW Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan 2030 to:

- grow visitation,
- to revitalise destinations and
- to increase visitor spend.

With the acknowledgement in today's meeting of the offer of \$3 million grant funding towards Stage 1 of the Mogo Adventure Trails Hub, I want to draw your attention to proposed logging activities of Forestry Corporation New South Wales that I believe will compromise the viability of this project. Forestry Corporation has both planned and proposed logging in 2 compartments within the footprint of these trails.

I strongly urge Council to negotiate with the local Forestry Corporation office to ensure that no logging activities take place in the area of the Mogo Adventure Trails Hub.

It is stated under considerations of this agenda item that:

"The Eurobodalla Destination Action Plan 2018-2022 identified the potential for mountain bike trail development to enhance and better position Eurobodalla as a **significant nature-based tourism** destination on the South Coast."

It therefore makes no sense to me that while investing in such an infrastructure project we would allow the degradation of a forested area to which we hope to attract large numbers of nature-based tourism visitors.

A post-harvest, logged forest does not provide visitors with a "quality visitor experience", nor does it "capitalise on the opportunities presented by the unique Aboriginal culture, nature and heritage of the Batemans Bay region." (these are also quotes from the Destination Action Plan)

A logged forest is an ugly, damaged ecosystem. The surviving wildlife struggles. It is a scar on the landscape and it does not portray a community embracing its unique natural assets.

I am asking you today "Should Council allow the degradation of the foundational natural assets of the Adventure Trails area, right where we are developing a nature-based tourism project that relies on showcasing our natural heritage?"

The online Forestry Corporation Plan Portal shows that **planned** logging in Compartment no. 180 in Mogo State Forest covers about one half of what will be part of the Maulbrooks Rd section of the Adventure Trails.

I have a map illustrating that here for you.

The logging of this compartment would seriously compromise the visual amenity and the appeal of a significant portion of the Maulbrooks Road Mountain Bike Trails.

A second compartment, to the east of Mogo, Compartment no. 146, currently has **proposed** logging status and includes the trail that cyclists can take when approaching the Deep Creek Dam Loop from the trailhead in Mogo Village. I have copies of a satellite view of this area here for you.

If Compartment 146 remained unlogged then mountain-bikers would be able to ride through at least one intact forest before reaching the beautiful, unlogged Dam Loop Trails.

The report presented to Council today frequently refers to ways in which this project aligns with a number of Tourism and Destination Plans and Economic Development Strategies, which is great...

but that alignment is compromised when the nature-based tourism project sits within the carnage of a logged native forest. It then fails to meet objectives (from the South Coast Destination Management Plan) to be “sustainable and compatible with the branding and character of the region” and it no longer upholds “the importance of the natural environment to the ongoing sustainability of the visitor economy.”

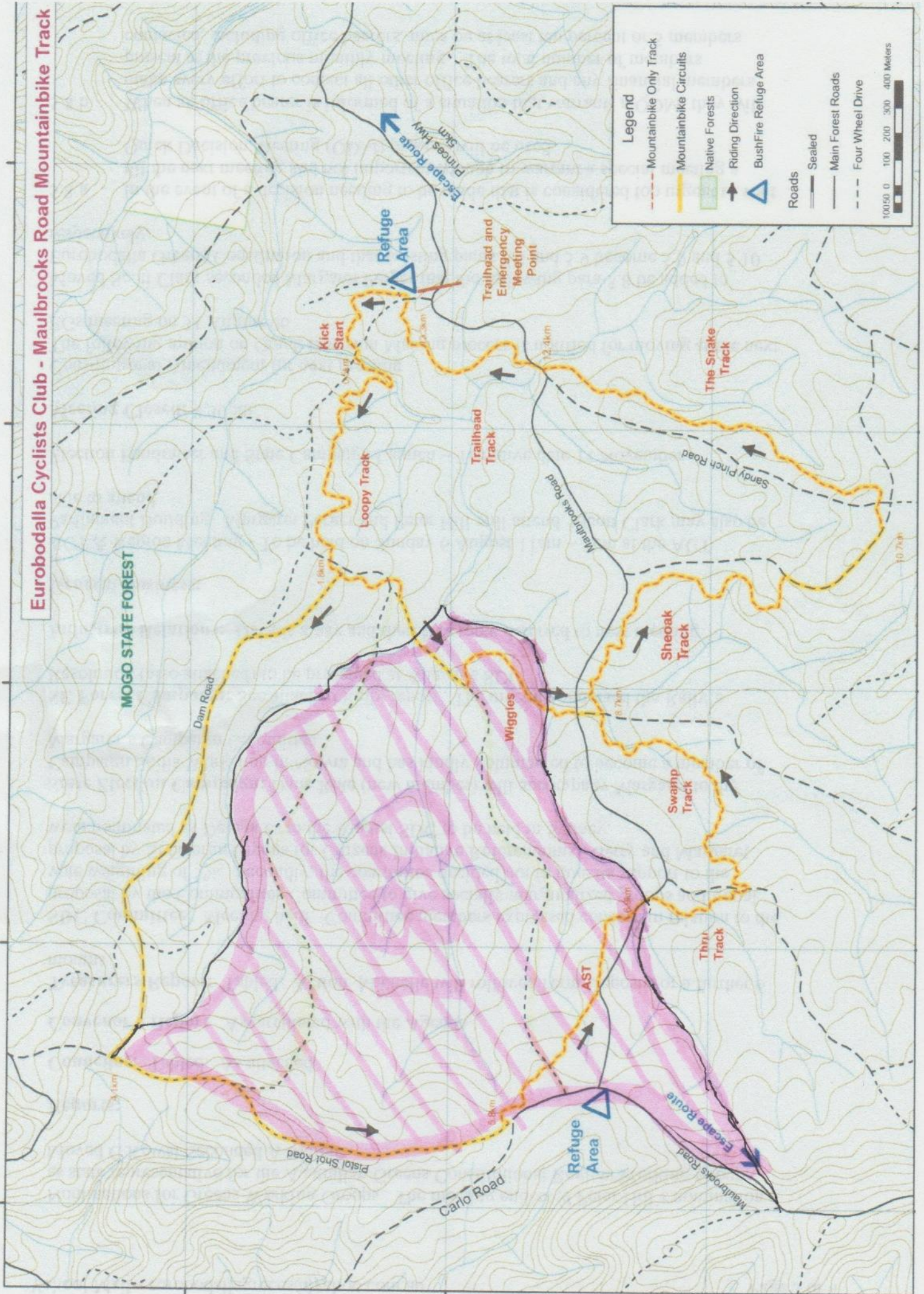
We have a chance to build something here which will make Mogo and surrounds an even better place to visit, play and stay. Mountain biking is a great example of an alternative use to which our State forests can be put as we exit from logging them, for little economic return to our community, and instead value them as a destination that showcases our natural heritage and attracts visitors.

Let's make this terrific project worth it by ensuring that our native forests are managed for their recreational and ecological values, and for the irreplaceable role they play in nature-based tourism enterprises.

I believe that for this ambitious tourism project to reach its full potential for boosting economic recovery in our Shire, Council should strongly and urgently request from Forestry Corporation that the 2 particular compartments I have mentioned be set aside from logging before it's too late. Leaving these 2 compartments intact, not logging them, would enhance the experience for incoming mountain bikers.

Thank you for your time this morning.

Eurobodalla Cyclists Club - Maulbrooks Road Mountainbike Track





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Princes Hwy

A1

A1

Tomakin Rd

Tomakin Rd

Tomakin Rd

Mogo Wildlife Park

Balinda

Dumms Creek Rd

Dumms Creek Rd

