

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 **12 April 2022**

Name	Subject/Comments
Public Forum – 9.30am	
Patricia Hellier	NOM22/005 Eurobodalla Shire Council supports an end to Native Forest Logging in Eurobodalla Shire
Julie Taylor Mills	NOM22/005 Eurobodalla Shire Council supports an end to Native Forest Logging in Eurobodalla Shire
Nick Hopkins	NOM22/005 Eurobodalla Shire Council supports an end to Native Forest Logging in Eurobodalla Shire
Fiona McCuaig	NOM22/005 Eurobodalla Shire Council supports an end to Native Forest Logging in Eurobodalla Shire
Dr Michelle Hamrosi	NOM22/005 Eurobodalla Shire Council supports an end to Native Forest Logging in Eurobodalla Shire

Good morning Mayor, Councillors, General Manager, Staff and those that are currently watching via zoom my name is Patricia Hellier from Batemans Bay I would like to speak NOM22/005 “End to Native Forrest Logging in Eurobodalla”.

Firstly I would like you the Councillors to note that contained on our property we have a large variety of trees some are as tall as 40 mtrs.

I question **WHY** is this motion on the Councils Agenda as I believe this is an issue for the NSW State Government and **WHY** has this motion been raised given that there is a current inquiry into Timber and Forrest Industry.

It is known that at the recent Council election you Councillors stood on **“transparency” and I note that the issue of “logging” did not appear on any of the elected Councillors manifesto therefore this was not an “issue that you were elected on” and I would also like it noted that this issue has not gone out for “Community Consultation” and it certainly does not pass the pub test.**

Most of the Councillors would be aware of the recent Public Hearing of the Timber and Forrest Industry that was conducted in the Council Chambers on Tuesday 5th April 2022. It should be noted that Mr Anthony McMahon Acting Chief Executive Officer from Bega Valley stated that Forestry was a good neighbour and Forestry attended a community meeting at Eden during the fires where the RFS was under resourced Forestry changed the dynamics of the meeting given that they were able to offer support. Forestry also participates in Bega’s Bushfire Management Committee and they were at the fore front during the Black Summer fires. Mr McMahon stated that the Logging Industry has been a major contributor to the Bega Valley Economy mentioning figures from \$120 - 140 Million dollars. Mr McMahon stated that the Timber Industry worked hand in hand with other industries such as Eco-Tourism.

I do not intend to go into every detail of this inquiry

I would like to draw your attention to a media release dated 21st March 2022 – **“Sustainable Forestry continues to achieve positive outcomes”** this media release was a result of **a conference for International Day of Forest and sustainable production and consumption”**.

Mr David Rowlinson Planet Ark Environmental Foundation’s stated **“The Australian forestry sector is one of the most highly regulated and well regarded in the world”**. Well over 95% of Australian plantations and state forest are certified and the significant majority of the wood used in the construction sector has a chain-of-custody certification. **Certification also ensure that when a tree is harvested another is planted in it’s place.**

Mr Rowlinson said using wood as a construction material **helped to mitigate climate change**. “Wood is the only major building material that is **renewable**. An Australian frame and truss house will use about 12 cubic metres of radiata pine in its structure. This will be regrown in Australian plantations in less that a minute. As a tree grows they absorb **carbon dioxide**. Consequently about half of the dry weight of wood is carbon – so called biogenic carbon – **which is stored as long as the building exists**. Timber consumes **minimal energy in its production** – so called embodied carbon – so it can be used as a low-emission substitute for materials that require larger amount of fossil fuels to be produced , **such as concrete and steel”**.

In relation to logging in our immediate area logging was conducted in an area up from Picnic Road prior to the 2020/21 bush fires it should be noted that since that logging, trees are growing back three fold. Unfortunately due the rain and wet grounds I am unable to get photos of this growth.

During the fires in 2020/21 **we applauded the logging and fire breaks in our area as fires were bearing down on us from from various directions including the Benandarah area.** I believe if we did not have this logging and fire breaks in place north Batemans Bay could have been destroyed this includes Long Beach, Maloney's, Surfside and Bay Ridge.

It should be noted that that South Coast native hardwoods is the base of the most durable composite hardwood boards and unlike plantation pines they do not need chemical treatments to improve their strength and/or durability.

Councillors Logging represents jobs –**the Eurobodalla is one of the lowest social demographic areas in NSW we cannot afford to lose any more jobs** – Councillors if we cease Logging in Australia how are we going to build homes – it should be noted that approximately 30% of timber is currently imported -if we lose the Logging Industry that will be another industry lost to Australians there will be a flow on affect to other related industries that is involved in building a new home including bricklayers, electricians, plumbers, concrete rs, kitchen suppliers etc. then ofcourse there is the purchasing of flooring products, window treatments etc.

Councillors hand on heart can you honestly say that there is an expert amongst you Councillors on this subject and can you honestly support a motion which is a **Political Green's Agenda** and commits Eurobodalla to **this political agenda** which will ultimately destroy jobs in many sectors.

Patricia Hellier

STATEMENT TO EUROBODALLA COUNCIL IN RELATION TO LOGGING AND INVITATION TO COUNCIL TO TAKE A STAND ON THIS ISSUE.

Hello all, I am Julie Taylor Mills, from SERCA but also on the State Boards of WIRES and of Nature Conservation Council. We have a 40 acre property south of Moruya which survived the fires.

My personal story is that I am also a WIRES carer and WIRES was overwhelmed with calls for assistance to animals during the fires and in the aftermath of the fires as native animals returned to a burnt and annihilated habitat.

On one such call to the backstreets of Mogo in Feb 2020 I was confronted by a dual carriage logging truck loaded up with burnt logs sitting on a side street of Mogo and I realised these logs had come from the forests to the west. I was shocked that less than a month after the forests had been almost obliterated, the loggers had moved back in, even as we were putting out supplementary food for wildlife and checking for unburnt areas for surviving wildlife to return to. I just couldn't believe this was still occurring.

I learnt that this was what was called Salvage logging.

But I later learnt from key staff within FCNSW that

- the hardwood part of the business makes almost no money
- The plantation section of FCNSW makes 160 times more revenue than the native forest harvesting division.
- In fact, in 2021, Native forestry earned \$400,000 last year while plantation division earned \$60million.

I did some more digging and discovered that

- 96% of native timber ends up as woodchip and pallets
- Native forest harvesting accounts for less than 1.5% of the employment down here – this has been falling for the last 5 years.

I just couldn't understand why the industry continued....so I became actively involved in advocacy.

Tabling of ANU/Frontier Economics report – Comparing the value of alternative uses of native forests in Southern NSW.

There have been many reports on the economics (or lack of) of this industry and most recently ANU and Frontier established last year that if you cease logging our native forests in the South of NSW the key economic benefit is a significant win in carbon abatement. The State Government is looking for significant carbon abatement opportunities. Stopping logging the native forests of Southern NSW would represent the biggest carbon abatement opportunity available currently in Australia. In addition to this, there are significant benefits from the creation of forest based tourism related industries. One of these industries is mountain biking which has been so successful elsewhere – however, \$8 mill has gone to create mountain bike trails through dead and recovering forest near Mogo full of logging stumps. Why?

The report established that the total benefits of these alternative uses of state forest amount to \$66million per annum.

Native forest logging employees (totalling less than 300) can be absorbed into the lucrative plantation industry, to ensuring the forest is treated as an asset, in keeping forests safe from fires, accessible and well managed for tourism, and managing feral pest problems that have emerged post fires.

1. This is a marginal business with poor returns.
2. Its role as an employer is shrinking and
3. there are significant direct economic benefits from ceasing harvesting an
4. there are lots of opportunity for the 120 people directly involved in harvesting and hauling native timber.

To Eurobodalla Council I wish to say the following

- The opportunities for carbon abatement via arrested deforestation are immense.
- Our local forests, our surviving native wildlife deserves security and refugia to recover and build populations again.
- The local economies of this region are underpinned by tourism and yet we are white-anting this important industry for just \$400,000 a year and 120 -300 jobs - all jobs that can which can be absorbed in plantations and forest management.

I implore Council to support this position and recognise that our forests are worth more standing.

Thank you for this opportunity to present today. I would like to acknowledge the Walbanga people of the Yuin nation who cared for the forests of their country so well for thousands of years before colonisation.

In support of the imminent notice of motion on logging in our public native forests he wishes communicate the following:

Both of the Black Summer south coast megafires ...Badja and Currowan... started from lightning strikes in dried out logging debris left behind after logging operations. The post-logging burn regime undertaken by the Forestry Corporation no longer keeps pace with the logging schedule because the window of opportunity for safe post-logging burns has shrunk to too small a period of time thanks to climate change. Hence Forestry is compelled to leave piles of dry vegetation everywhere in logged compartments awaiting lightning strikes in the following summer's heatwaves.

On 26 November 2019 lightning struck logging debris in Currowan State Forest in southern Shoalhaven Shire. 35 days later on New Year's Eve that megafire swept out of control through my rural residential neighbourhood behind Malua Bay and completely destroyed our house, workshop and gardens. The before and after drone photos illustrate the totality of the devastation.

I was two parts devastated and three parts enraged. Myself and other local conservationists had been long warning about the dangers of logging debris left behind after logging operations. Our nightmare scenario had come true. I hold climate change and the logging industry jointly responsible for this. Furthermore, extensively peer reviewed evidence confirms that logging increases the severity and frequency of wildfires (Prof David Lindenmayer et al).

The logging industry has become a major fire threat to the safety and well-being of our community.

Our Council should be advocating for an end to public native forest logging, a just transition to the profitable plantation sector and the promotion of our forests as nature based tourism assets, threatened species habitat recovery zones and carbon sinks.

Thank you for listening and for considering my message.

The Economic Value of our Old Growth Forests in the Eurobodalla Shire

By Fiona McCuaig from Bodalla

I strongly agree to the motion being put forward to end Old Growth Forest Logging (Native forest logging) in Eurobodalla.

The main points of my talk will be as follows:

1. Tourism is the main revenue stream on the South Coast. It is the life-blood of many businesses in Eurobodalla – and visitors come to experience our natural beauty, pristine and mostly in-tact environment.
2. Plantation forestry is the solution to solving wood supply shortages and it's also a business opportunity on the South Coast.
3. **Nature is our Business** – and any destruction to our natural environment is a DIRECT THREAT to local businesses, employment and economic prosperity of this region.
4. We are geographically in a fabulous location in NSW where we are in the centre triangle of Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne and tourist flock here to experience our beauty – and the tourist numbers are growing as the word spreads about our natural environment. Other areas such as north of Sydney have less natural habitat, less birdlife, less creeks where the water is so clean you can drink straight from it. We need to keep our Differential Advantage which is our pristine natural environment and that means protecting it.
5. We have good motels and restaurants – but we don't have the top in NSW with Michelin star restaurants etc... but that is OKAY – because that is not our core business – our business is showcasing our incredible beauty and this is what we have to offer – something which is unique and not many other regions have or have been smart enough to protect.
6. Short term resource extraction has no benefits to our community – it only threatens jobs in tourism now and also for the next generations by eroding our image of “clean & green.” It's ludicrous that our precious hardwood timbers are being sent to Japan as woodchips and made into palettes which have an avg lifespan of 3 months.
7. Our incredible spotted gums which are not only carbon sinks but habitat for native animals are being made into cardboard – the industry supports a handful of people on the south coast and our tax payer money is subsidising it. It's a no-brainer of what we must do.
8. With a significant marketing campaign for the Eurobodalla Shire Region strongly and proudly communicating we have ended native forests logging (like Victoria and WA have) and we have an incredible Marine Park with a network of marine sanctuaries, this:
 - WILL attract more visitors, WILL bring more money to the region, WILL employ more people and will ensure we have a sustainable business model moving forward.
9. We need to think Smart – we need to act Now.
10. I sincerely hope that all Councillors today will vote in favour of this motion – it's a no brainer. We need it for a strong economic future.

The Council or the Public may contact me anytime on the details below:

Thank you

Fiona McCuaig. B.Econ & Masters of Prop Devt

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Phone: 0402 892 759

Dear Mayor, Councillors, General Manager and Council Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about native forest logging in our region and why we need to end this practice for a multitude of reasons including economic and environmental ones.

I am a Surf Beach General Practitioner, a member of Doctors for the Environment and the South Coast Health and Sustainability Alliance.

My family and I moved to the South Coast of NSW because of its pristine environment with ample opportunities to enjoy an active healthy lifestyle. We feel so lucky to be part of this vibrant community: we feel we belong to the wider community of young families here to raise their children in a safe and connected place; of older citizens who have come to the coast with its mild climate to retire; a region rich with indigenous culture both past and present; a thriving local food bowl of regenerative farmers and sustainable seafood industry. There is much to

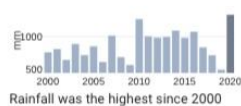
celebrate and love in this little pocket of Australia.



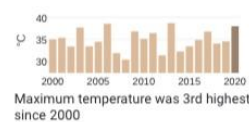
Eurobodalla [A]



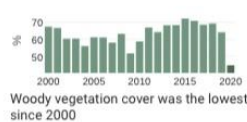
Rainfall



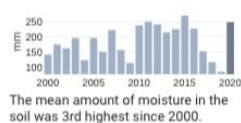
Maximum temperature



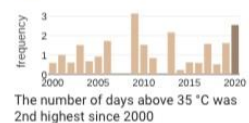
Tree cover



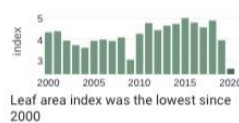
Soil moisture



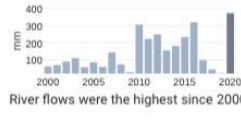
Hot days



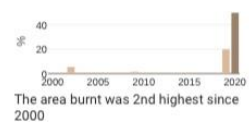
Vegetation condition



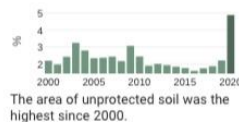
River flows



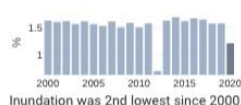
Bushfire extent



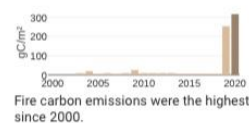
Exposed soil



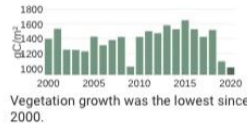
Inundation



Biomass burnt



Vegetation growth



This report card summarises changes in the region's natural resources and ecosystems in 2020.

Australia's Environment | 2020 Regional Report Card

Our environment is our greatest asset. Our forests are vital to our health, economy and society. But sadly, the current state of our environment is poor.

The Australian National University Centre for Water and Landscape Dynamics, annually provides a Regional Environmental Report Card for each local government area. It summarises a large number of observations on the trajectory of our natural resources and ecosystems. The bushfires of 2019/20 burnt 90% of our shire's national and state forests. The extent of the bushfires and biomass burnt, along with a massive reduction in tree cover, poor



Image: The recovering forests of Mogo state forest in the background, with recently logged trees stacked for pick-up.

vegetation condition and increase in soil exposure are the main indicators reflecting the current poor score of just 1.6 out of 10 (1).

Despite the bushfires of 2019/20, along with this incredibly depressing report, our state forests are still open to the business of logging. It pains me to sit and write about the impacts of this on my community. It adds to the burden of trauma that has settled densely upon us like a thick blanket of ash. Every day I drive along the blackened tree lined Princes highway and see the tufts of epicormic growth emerging from many, but not all, of the trunks. This regrowth is a beacon of hope. It shows how our forests can regenerate despite the ferocious fires. But they are also a constant reminder of how much we have lost, how much has changed in such a short period of time and how much we are set to lose if we continue on our current trajectory of climate change. We must pause and take stock.

Nothing short of transformational change is needed to safely re-direct us from the current catastrophic trajectory we are steering towards with regards to climate change. Scientists are warning us that bushfires like those of 2019/20 may become an annual threat, as our planet heats

up due to climate change. We must consider the future of logging sustainability within this wider and long-term context (3).

Native forest logging increases the severity at which forests burn. In a nutshell, logging operations increase the volume of coarse woody debris (much of the tree is left as waste), they open up the forest canopy, cause drying of soils and fuel, and allow stronger wind to affect fires on the forest floor (2).

Logging has been taking place behind the Mogo township for some years now. This is significant, as studies have shown that native forest logging increases the severity at which forests burn compared to unlogged and old growth forests - particularly in the first ten years after logging (2). This tourist township was significantly impacted by the bushfires of 2019/20, with 300 homes being lost in and around that town. One must consider the possibility that the ferociousness of the fires in and around this town, could be related to the past and ongoing logging of the forests in the vicinity directly behind this township. This has also significantly impacted local water quality as well as integrity of local roads being degraded due to erosion and landslides (7).

Numerous members of our community live alongside the boundaries of the Mogo state forests. Many are currently rebuilding their lives following the devastating bushfires. They daily face the grief and trauma of these events but also bear daily witness to the logging occurring around their homes. For many sensitive to the environment around them, it is incredibly triggering, re-traumatising and depressing. Native forestry logging has lost its social licence even before the bushfires. It is no longer acceptable for governments to ignore public opinion and provide taxpayer support for a non-viable industry. It just does not stack up.

We need to consider all the facts, when deciding the future of native forest logging. We must rely on science and research - both of which are pointing to the harm far outweighing the benefits. Our forests provide ecosystem services which we all rely on for health and wellbeing. These services are fundamental to our lives, but are often ignored and undervalued. These include:

Trees provide oxygen: it takes about thirty mature trees, on average, to produce the amount of oxygen we each breathe every year. They also absorb carbon dioxide, and hold it in their bodies, vegetation and soil - thereby protecting us against climate change. Trees purify our air, trapping pollutants like nitrogen dioxide and microscopic particles that harm our health. Trees absorb and redistribute water maintaining the water cycle. Trees access water deep in the ground and hold the moisture in their canopies. Trees help to increase rainfall and improve water quality, greatly reducing the cost of expensive water treatment when they are part of healthy intact forests surrounding water catchment areas. Clean drinking water depends on intact forests around catchment areas. Trees and native plants can prevent soil loss and flooding, if left undisturbed (4).

Without clean water, clean air, a stable climate and rich biodiversity, we have no healthy future and we have no thriving economy.

All these reasons show that keeping trees in the ground are critical to our health and wellbeing. Land clearing is linked to worsening climate change. And climate change, makes the aforementioned reasons for keeping trees in the ground even more important. With increased extreme weather events - bushfires, flooding, droughts and air pollution are all set to worsen as the earth's temperature increases. Our forests are critical assets requiring the upmost protection. Land clearing is also directly linked to the biodiversity and extinction crisis we are in. It is no secret that Australia is shamefully a species extinction hot spot in the world (5).

Our shire has a higher state of unemployment than other regions of NSW, so it is important to regional and rural communities to offer a fair transition.

In the Eurobodalla shire, 322 people (2.8%) are currently employed in the industry sector of agriculture, forestry & fishing (6). Of these, some 100 are employed directly in forestry. It is a very small industry in our region. I personally know a number of forestry NSW employees. They are good people, who want to do a good job. Many see their role within forestry as important - they mark the habitat trees for the bulldozers to avoid. Forestry employees care about their job, their co-workers and their communities. They must be included in the conversation about the future sustainability of their jobs, and be an integral part of the shift to a different range of employment opportunities in new and emerging sectors. This could include ecologically sensitive tourism, state of the art forestry management (working to enhance forest resilience in the face of climate change), biodiversity and rehabilitation projects as well working within sustainable plantation industries. Other options need to be explored that can provide similar products to the forestry industry but from different sources. These urgently need to be investigated, researched and scaled up. We have an enormous problem with waste that needs close examination with solutions in mind. How can we turn waste into useful products such as toilet paper, useful and cost effective building materials etc. Other potential material such as the use of hemp, could be explored and grown sustainably in our region, from which paper and toilet paper could be manufactured.

Connection to country

For indigenous Australians, the connection to land and country is integral to their health and well-being. For many it is profoundly spiritual, and provides a connection to their ancestors, provides a sense of identity and validation, access to medicines, traditional ceremonies and fundamentally provides meaning in life. Twenty five percent of the population in Mogo is Indigenous Australian. Country and the forests within the south coast are deeply important to the Walabunga people of Yuin country.

The indigenous community in and around Mogo have experienced high rates of psychological distress following the destructive bushfires of 2019/20. There has



even been a number of suicides in the Mogo indigenous community in the aftermath of the fires. This has added to the communal trauma of these events. We must forge deep and meaningful connections with our indigenous communities, in moving forward on these issues. They need to be respected and heard. We need new ways of integrating forest management, indigenous employment and traditional knowledge. This is an important way we can address social inequities, mental health, and environmental stewardship.

Once we know better, we should do better. Our history does not need to be part of our future. We must let go of old ways of thinking and embrace new ways.

Doctors for the Environment NSW is calling on:

The permanent protection of all intact ecosystems including old growth, remnant and high conservation value forests as well as the sustainable management of plantation forests. Highly biodiverse regions will need greater protection, such as those providing home to threatened species such as the greater glider and swift parrot. Areas around water catchment also need long-term protection.

South Coast Health and Sustainability Alliance is calling council to:

- 1. Advocate to the state government to end native forest logging.**
- 2. Recognise that increasing tourism within state forests in our region is a huge economic opportunity.**
- 3. Call on state government to fund a fair and suitable job transition for current forestry worker (we can afford to do this given that the logging operations currently operates at a loss and is propped up by tax payer subsidies)**
- 4. Acknowledge that our forests are a crucial carbon sink – they must be protected to reduce climate pollution. Economic opportunity exists in the carbon market that could be explored.**

In conclusion, from an economical, social, cultural and environmental point-of-view, the business case for continuation of native forest logging does not stack up. In the context of the changing climate, all focus needs to be on reducing emission, mitigating and adapting to the heating climate, and the increased risk of extreme weather events climate change brings. It is time for a paradigm shift that is supported by science and one that recognises the incredible value in caring for our forests, respecting the home they provide for a multitude of flora and fauna, and the integral part they play in our current and future health and wellbeing.

Our forests are vital to our health, economy and society.

Our environment is our greatest asset. Our children's future depends on our bold decisions today. Please support the end of this unnecessarily destruction of our forests.

Dr Michelle Hamrosi

On behalf of South Coast Health and Sustainability Alliance and Doctors for the Environment NSW



What legacy you leave our future generations?

References

- 1) [https://storage.googleapis.com/aer-report-cards-2020/LGA_2019_AUST/Eurobodalla%20\(A\).pdf?fbclid=IwAR1PPLYhbgHk2zcDrp6bnritarHg-EVLnztCd7f7_Bg8WKX94IkHKDOl5b8](https://storage.googleapis.com/aer-report-cards-2020/LGA_2019_AUST/Eurobodalla%20(A).pdf?fbclid=IwAR1PPLYhbgHk2zcDrp6bnritarHg-EVLnztCd7f7_Bg8WKX94IkHKDOl5b8)
- 2) https://www.bushfirefacts.org/uploads/1/3/2/1/132188020/f_bushfire_science_report_no._3_-_bushfires_and_logging.pdf
- 3) <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/dangerous-summer-escalating-bushfire-heat-drought-risk/>
- 4) <https://www.dea.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Forests-and-native-vegetation-fact-sheet-Final-01-19.pdf>
- 5) <https://www.dea.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DEA-Biodiversity-Policy-11-19.pdf>
- 6) <https://profile.id.com.au/eurobodalla/industries> reports data from 2016
- 7) https://www.aidr.org.au/media/7694/nyman-and-sheridan-2015_erosion-in-burned-catchments_afac.pdf