

URGENT: regional community economy, health and resilience at risk due to logging of old growth carbon sinks and critical water catchment in fire-affected regional NSW

Dear Honourable Minister,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding activity which is placing our regional community economy, health and natural disaster resilience at risk.

Illegal logging of Old Growth Carbon sinks, water catchments, and koala habitat forest is currently unfolding in Ellis and Bagawa State Forests near Dundurrabin on the Dorrigo Plateau, Clarence Shire, Mid-north Coast of NSW, involving both Forestcorp and Greensills Bros. Pty Ltd.

There is currently an ongoing operation illegally targeting old growth forest, including trees in excess of 150cm diameter, endangered Scrub Turpentine, Koala habitat species and other protected taxa.

I urge you to please respond quickly, as this illegal activity is currently taking place in a region already badly affected by fire, through which intact forest has been dramatically reduced. These forests have enormous value in a wide range of categories.

HABITAT: the forests consists of important habitat species for a number of critically endangered and vulnerable species, including Koala and Yellow-bellied glider, Greater Glider, Sphagnum Frog, Stuttering Frog, Spotted-tail Quoll, Sooty Owl, Powerful Owl, and Glossy Black Cockatoo

WATER: These landscapes with their soils, forests and waterways also constitute critical environmental infrastructure for our beautiful region, being the highest land in the catchment for the Clarence basin, providing the priceless water supply to hundreds of thousands of people.

TOURISM VALUES: These landscapes are also a fundamental part of the natural values of this World Heritage-recognised region, whose biodiversity and natural beauty make it an important tourism drawcard and economic asset for the state. As tourism destinations our forests and waterways have very high value in an intact state that is diminished or lost if they are further degraded by logging.

CARBON SINKS: Setting aside their clear habitat value for endangered species, vital ecosystem services through securing water supplies, and tourism value, these forests are also critical infrastructure for climate crisis mitigation. We live in a time of actual felt impact of anthropogenic global heating. The science is clear. The causes are known. The solutions are known.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING: In regional NSW our lives are increasingly defined by the trauma of natural disasters and their aftermath, be it drought, fire, storm or flood. Our resilience to these disasters is linked to the resilience of our landscape and ecosystems. The heavy cost to regional communities of these ongoing crises, in terms of general health, and mental health and wellbeing is only just being realised. Old growth forest is critical environmental infrastructure for climate crisis mitigation and should no longer be logged. Our health, wellbeing and community resilience depend on this critical environmental infrastructure.

Next to the massive intergenerational costs of its destruction, short term economic gain for a few corporations and their investors is egregious folly. I urge you to please take immediate action to address these concerns on our behalf:

- 1: Please take immediate action by calling for the EPA to issue a Stop-work Order.
- 2: Call for a thorough investigation into this activity and ensure it is conducted transparently and in accordance with the law.
- 3: In light of their value as Carbon sinks etc. put pressure on those concerned to re-appraise policy and ban logging of Old Growth forest.
- 4: Urge and support the entities involved to seek viable and sustainable livelihood solutions for their workers and communities affected by fire, flood and drought.

Doing so is nothing short of stepping up to our current local, national and global obligations, and those to future generations, by prioritising the value of these ancient forests as habitat for critically endangered species, as carbon sinks, as critical water supply infrastructure and as important tourism assets, and most importantly as one of the critical foundations of community wellbeing. I thank you for your time, and for all your efforts on communities' behalves in these uncertain times.

Yours sincerely,

INSTRUCTIONS: As always, personalisation is key. The above talking points could be re-ordered to highlight the area of concern for each minister, or send as-is in bulk by pasting the addresses below into you email recipient box. We want to highlight the intersectionality of Climate Change issues by contacting ministers across many different departments. Many will likely reply that it is not their area and they are sending it on to the environment minister, but at least it gets them thinking in terms of interconnection!

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

These are (in order): the Deputy PM and the ministers for: Environment, Forestry, Climate Change, Resources, Health, Tourism, and Regional Development.

richard.marles.mp@aph.gov.au; Minister.Plibersek@dcceew.gov.au; minister.watt@aph.gov.au;
chris.bowen.mp@aph.gov.au; media@industry.gov.au; minister.butler@health.gov.au;
trade.minister@dfat.gov.au; Minister.King@mo.infrastructure.gov.au

To contact the PRIME MINISTER The Hon Anthony Albanese visit:

<https://www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm>

NSW GOVERNMENT

These are (in order) the Premier, Deputy Premier, and the ministers for: Environment, Agriculture and Forestry, Emergency and Resilience, Lands and water, Mental Health, and Tourism

office@perrottet.minister.nsw.gov.au; office@toole.minister.nsw.gov.au;
office@griffin.minister.nsw.gov.au; office@saunders.minister.nsw.gov.au;
office@cooke.minister.nsw.gov.au; office@anderson.minister.nsw.gov.au;
office@taylor.minister.nsw.gov.au; office@franklin.minister.nsw.gov.au