

## Horror Story with Hope

As this planet undergoes one of six great extinction crises in history, Australian logging is identified as a causal factor<sup>1</sup>. With 1071 native species, populations and ecological communities in NSW listed as threatened with extinction<sup>2</sup> it is vital you are aware of, and act on the knowledge **that**:

Trees are being cut as fast as possible in NSW native coastal and hinterland forests (whether or not they are even sold) and logging operational objectives include:



*Fell and suppress from natural regrowth cycles species not considered merchantable, i.e. **most** ground, understorey and canopy species whether or not food or habitat for threatened wildlife<sup>3</sup> Centre, right Glossy Black Cockatoo feed trees routinely felled or smashed. Tallow wood koala food is frequently destroyed.*



*Maximise soil disturbance during logging to favour regeneration of Blackbutt*



*Alter native forest light regimes to create one species dominance<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> University of NSW (2009, July 29), Extinction Crisis Looms in Oceania. Science Daily, retrieved February 21, 2011 from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/07/090728102301.htm> (Author of quoted report Dr James Watson, President of the Society for Conservation Biology)

<sup>2</sup> Nature Conservation Council NSW, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010

<sup>3</sup> Harvest Plans specify: 'remove shade tolerant non merchantable species wherever possible'

<sup>4</sup> Harvest Plans specify: 'maximise ground disturbance and as much non merchantable material as possible to create seed bed' (for maximum regrowth of Blackbutt only)

With intense and widespread over-cutting to supply wood volumes to the multinational BORAL far in excess of sustainable supply<sup>5</sup>, highly invasive weed species are being introduced into pristine areas of NSW coast and hinterland forests. Hundreds of thousands of hectares are being exposed to bare earth as intense felling occurs within metres of what were remote, deep, dark forest recesses, frequently the last refuge of threatened species. Although buffers of 10, 20, 30 and 40 metres are meant to apply respectively to fourth, third, second and first order streams (classified according to their order in the catchment) routine breaches mean devastation of canopy, understorey and soil to within 1-2 metres of streams, on slopes of up to 30 degrees. It is not uncommon to witness total devastation right up to the banks of a watercourse. Once infested these areas can never be restored. Imminent weed invasion is the death knell of rainforest and high conservation remnants across the state. From Gosford to the border previously intact creeks and drainage lines to become weed corridors.



Camphor Laurel **a)** now under rainforest canopy at base of 1 km almost clear fell 40 m of threatened species habitat **b)** germinating at top of **c)** 25 degree slope, bare earth 120 metres for 3 trees (GPS foreground bottom left )

Silt (and herbicide) pour down mountainsides in the rain as recovered ecosystems deemed plantations are clear felled in areas some of which were last logged 60-70 years ago.



Silt - straight into Pipeclay Creek via bridge to block gills or smother native aquatic life

Massive industrialised harvesting machines that can clear 200 hectares a month are destroying NSW native forests now. This clearing paves the way for feral animals to move swiftly through devastated coastal forests *cleaning up* what



<sup>5</sup> *Sustaining Native Forest Operations: Forests NSW / [The Audit Office of New South Wales]. (Performance audit) April 2009*

native creatures escape the slaughter, for their trees and hollows are gone.



The **NEW Native Forest** cleared of understorey, can be cut at 20 cm diameter

It is also the process by which much NSW native forest is being converted by stealth into a *timber mine* to supply single species crops harvested in fast rotations for wood chip and pulp at a diameter of 20 cm.

Many national parks will be habitat islands lacking forest habitat corridors to sustain them genetically and act as buffer against invasive species' impact. Forests that once protected national parks *from*, will soon be the source *of* weeds and feral animals.

Small communities feel powerless for against a barbarism sanctioned by the NSW state government. Unless you see the 40 logging trucks a day emerging from remote catchments for 24 months nonstop, it's difficult to believe, but the evidence is overwhelming.

Numerous reports of regulatory breaches are ignored, also by accrediting bodies.<sup>6</sup> (See also <https://nativesrule.sharefile.com/d/s2b8193987f9418cb> - large file)

Despite admitting it can't supply to BORAL this year Forests NSW keep cutting, proving the Auditor General's words, "To meet wood supply commitments, native forest managed by Forests NSW on the north coast **is being cut faster than it is growing back.**"<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See reports published by citizen action groups in response to nil or inadequate regulation by NSW state government authorities, in particular Forests NSW and the Office of Environment and Heritage. *Audit of Compliance of Forestry Operations in The Upper North East NSW Forest Agreement Region*. Prepared by Dailan Pugh for the North East Forest Alliance, January 2011

Also, *A Report on Forestry Operations in The Lower North East Forest Agreement Region of New South Wales*, Nativesrule, March 2010 ([www.nativesrule.org](http://www.nativesrule.org))

Hammond-Deakin, N. and Higginson, S. (2011) *If a tree falls: Compliance failures in the public forests of New South Wales*, Environmental Defender's Office (NSW) Ltd, Sydney, Australia.

<sup>7</sup> *Sustaining Native Forest Operations: Forests NSW* / [The Audit Office of New South Wales]. (Performance audit) April 2009

Forewarned by conservationists and senior forestry officials (many of whom chose to leave rather than witness this disaster), Forests NSW did not adjust yield when there was a chance and BORAL ensured it would be compensated for lack of supply.<sup>8</sup> Multinationals can position themselves for maximum advantage in negotiating with governments. The conversion of the coast and hinterland of NSW into a vast 'pseudo' plantation is occurring as newly clear felled 'plantations' join up with heavily cut native forests being manipulated into single species dominated regrowth, in effect a *pseudo* plantation. Licencing conditions that harvest at 20 cm at breast height mean fast rotation of Blackbutt for wood chip and pulp for engineered wood product.

If there is a deal whereby BORAL forego monetary compensation for lack of supply of this current contract (this last two years and the ten that it is in place) in return for longer or ongoing access to NSW native forests, the state government dooms our wildlife. It means the end of a diversity of habitat to accommodate species and the devolution into sterile supply landscapes. Blackbutt and *desirable* commercial species for woodchip and or other highly industrialised processes perhaps as the sole product or service of what were once nature and places of wonder. A vast single species dominated coastal and hinterland landscape that soon recorded nil or very few threatened species, would make it easy to assert threatened species would not be harmed in future harvests. (BORAL was recently pursuing certification as a *green tick light* sustainable wood chip supplier).

If the government permits a continuation of this overcutting of NSW native forests for any reason, they will be in a short time nothing more than a *timber mine*, a pseudo plantation suitable only for wood chip and pulp products long into the future. Non renewable. Our wildlife and habitat corridors will be replaced by an export crop and our wildlife will basically be at an end, along with significant carbon sink and massive damage to our coastal water resources.

But this can be stopped. Forest activist and climate change organisations are uniting through the Australian Forest and Climate Change Alliance and ending timber supply agreements driving this destruction is high on the agenda. There are numerous ways *you can assist* to prevent further destruction of NSW. Please contact me via [nativesrule@gmail.com](mailto:nativesrule@gmail.com) for further information. I believe this is the greatest environmental emergency NSW has even faced and it is urgent, for the damage will not be able to be undone, ever.

Nativesrule

Australian Forest and Climate Change Alliance

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<http://forestsandclimate.net/about>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid..p.43 *'There is no clause in current wood supply agreements for high quality large sawlog on the north coast that allows for a non-compensable reduction in commitment following a review of available timber resources. This clause was removed when the Government renegotiated wood supply agreements in 2003 following the 'icon' decision. Resource reviews were a key risk management tool for Forests NSW which is no longer available under wood supply agreements for large logs.'*