

BARBARA AND MAUREEN GUTHRIE AND KINGSHOTT

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**Organisation:** N/A

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**Location:** New South Wales

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**Supporting materials uploaded:** N/A

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**Topic 1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW**

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We live in the mid north coast region of NSW, surrounded by State forests and national parks. It is the country of the Gumbaynggirr people who maintain strong cultural and spiritual ties to the natural environment.

We are retired lawyers, not experts in forests or the timber industry. We are not members of any political party and were relieved when Labor won the most recent NSW election as, in opposition, they promised to create a Great Koala national park.

Instead, the Labor government has presided over an increased rate and volume of logging in the proposed park area, which is destroying the habitat of koala and greater glider populations. Both of these species were listed as endangered in 2022.

To many local residents, ecologists and other environmental experts, it appears that Forestry Corporation of NSW is 'going for broke', logging as much as they can before a national park is established.

Paragraph 6.74 of a 2020 Legislative Council report makes clear that the fundamental issue facing koalas is '...the fragmentation and loss of their habitat.' [Koala populations and habitat in NSW 30 June 2020]. The NSW government, via Forestry Corporation, however, is continuing to log koala habitat, including nationally important koala areas.

In May 2024 the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) made a submission to Reviewing the NSW Koala Strategy Discussion Paper. We strongly support NEFA's submission.

One of our main concerns about the timber industry in NSW is that Forestry Corporation and its logging contractors cannot be relied on to comply with their legal obligations, as indicated by a recent Land and Environment Court decision relating to unlawful harvesting in environmentally significant areas (EPA v Forestry Corporation of NSW [2024] NSW LEC 78). In that case Pepper J states:

Para 124 '...the environmental crimes committed by Forestry Corporation NSW were objectively serious, causing, as they did, substantial actual and potential ecological harms.' The judge listed Forestry Corporation's lengthy prior convictions for environmental offences (para 134) and stated at para 137 '...it has a significant history of unlawfully carrying out forestry operations...'. The Court accepted the EPA's submissions that the Forestry Corporation is likely to re-offend and that it does not have good prospects of rehabilitation (para 139).

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In light of this we have no confidence in Forestry Corporation's stewardship of native forests in NSW or the sustainability of current and future forestry operations.

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**Topic 2. Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values**

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Unsustainable logging practices are pushing endangered species towards extinction. We support an immediate end to native forest logging.