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**AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE IN IMMINENT DANGER FROM LOGGING**  
**www.nativesrule.org 26/7/2010**

This is to alert the Australian public to the **greatest emergency facing Australian biodiversity – rapacious logging of our native forests**. It has escalated in impact as governments supply multinational companies with contracted amounts of timber based on overestimates of the resource.

If the federal government does not buy out the multinational contracts that promise supply of more wood than the country is capable of providing, **Australian flora and wildlife will be so damaged within the next 1–2 years IT WILL NEVER RECOVER**. This can be done for 1/10<sup>th</sup> the amount ‘conceded’ to mining companies in revised mining super tax, or 3 times the cost of subsidising a few lucky individuals to purchase new ‘green’ cars.

Rapacious, unsupervised logging is threatening or causing the extinction of many species at state, regional and local levels. **Over 50 species and 8 ecological communities listed under the NSW Threatened Species Act are threatened at the state level by timber harvesting<sup>1</sup>**. Last year a comprehensive study by Australian scientists reported that the **6th greatest extinction crisis of Earth’s history is centred in our region, Oceania, with 70% of Australian forests already being ecologically degraded by logging a major factor** – and this isn’t mentioned as an election issue. <sup>2</sup>

Senior government scientists, conservation groups and even logging workers acknowledge it – (some latter on film). This fact is not able to get to the Australian public due to Forests NSW’ spin on convoluted laws/agreements masking on ground reality. Many in the media<sup>2</sup> are unaware of what’s happening in the backblocks and the *massive secondary impacts* that will lead to mass extinction in a very short time.

Scientists and conservationists know about the **ecological impacts of this wholesale destruction of forests** while Forestry Officials can deny it’s happening because they leave thin veneers of trees here and there. Impacts are great and are both immediate and delayed:

**IMMEDIATE IMPACT - Outright slaughter**. Native creatures crushed by huge machinery that fells entire mountainsides. Total annihilation of habitat for refuge or sustenance. All burnt once logged. Ash on the ground the native animal or bird’s new home - if not crushed. This happening also to threatened species because of, possibly deliberate, inadequate pre-logging surveys. Modus operandi: if not found in a few allocated hours then it doesn’t exist *and we can log it*. Vast slopes cleared, soil eroded, inadequate codes of practice routinely breached, random, but usually nil, monitoring or enforcement. Recent fines insult, as little as \$1,500. The state forest agencies will now go where they would never go before because of what the forestry workers term ‘the push for the wood’ – to supply these contracts.

**DELAYED IMPACTS include:**

• **FERAL ANIMAL AND WEED INVASION**

With bare earth/burnt ground left by current logging practices, weed invasion is rife. Seas of lantana and camphor laurel seedlings have, and are poised to form, virtual monocultures in NSW alone, replacing native ecosystems. **Feral animals proliferate, picking off what’s left of wildlife now without refuge.**

The Australian weed invasion crisis, despite all strategies to prevent spread is rapidly accelerated by logging. There are not now and never will be enough resources to control this; it will be impossible to restore. Actual forest resources of native eucalypts will also be lost as seedlings compete with weed growth.

- **BELL MINER ASSOCIATED DIEBACK**

**870,000 ha of forest in NSW is currently impacted by tree dieback**, with majority due to **Bell Miner Associated Dieback (BMAD)**. Scientific modelling indicates **>2 million ha moist NSW coastal forest at risk of BMAD**. The government and scientific consensus<sup>3</sup> is that much is due to dense, often weedy, understoreys caused by removal of the canopy. So retained trees left standing also go. Susceptible eucalypts are the widespread Flooded Gum, Grey Gum, Ironbark, White Gum, all sought after timbers. **Bell Miner dieback is most common and relevant in the most productive of forests, threatening forestry itself.**

- **SPREAD OF DIEBACK FUNGUS**

Cinnamon fungus (Phytophthora) is an introduced soil pathogen capable of killing many Australian plant species including many eucalypts. It is spread by soil adhering to vehicles, and logging activity is a well known cause of spread. It has a huge impact on native vegetation and reduces timber yields.

- **LOSS OF WATER QUALITY**

The quality and quantity of water from catchments are much reduced by logging. With water supply a major issue facing Australia, it is bordering on insanity to log or otherwise disturb our precious water catchments.

- **REDUCED CARBON STORAGE**

Australian forests are part of the carbon sink the world is trying to retain<sup>4</sup> - reason alone to protect them.

**IF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DOESN'T BUY OUT REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT CONTRACTS IN ALL STATES - which they can well afford to do - THE AUSTRALIAN ENVIRONMENT WILL BE SEVERELY DAMAGED AND MANY SPECIES BROUGHT CLOSER TO EXTINCTION. IT HAS TO BE THIS ELECTION THIS TIME, NOW. 8985-7003/0448899684/nativesrule@gmail.com**

1 Compiled from NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act website.

2 Forestry and National Parks Estate Act 1998 *removed any 3<sup>rd</sup> party community rights to challenge the validity of logging operations that are the subject of the Act. The only really legal question is after the event - for example a compliance action of sorts - which is of course retrospective and after the environment has been logged and damaged. ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDER'S OFFICE 29TH MARCH 2010*

3 Natural Resources Advisory Council: BMAD is a form of eucalypt dieback caused by phloem feeding insects called psyllids (*Glycaspis*). BMAD occurs throughout Victoria, NSW and southern Queensland. Approximately 2.5 million hectares of eucalypt forest in NSW are at risk of eucalypt decline and 870,000 hectares in east coast NSW are affected. The causes of BMAD are complex and include disturbance that opens the canopy, presence of Bell Miners and psyllids, moisture retaining soils, a dense understorey and reduced frequency of fire.

4 Mackey BG et al. 2008. Green carbon: The role of natural forests in carbon storage. Part 1: A green carbon account of Australia's south-eastern eucalypt forests, and policy implications. The Australian National University, Canberra.

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