

Native Vegetation Regulation Review  
Environment Protection Authority  
PO Box A290  
Sydney South NSW 1232

Public comment on the Draft Native Forestry Code of Practice for Southern NSW

Dear Environment Protection Authority,

I am aware of some current issues with the code because of firewood logging in Mount Rae forest. I have seen many letters to the Goulburn Post objecting to this and read articles from local conservationists. I have also read an article from the Southern Tablelands Farm Forestry Network trying to justify firewood logging by saying they are doing it to improve native forests and that firewood is greenhouse positive. They have falsely used the current act to claim that Mount Rae Forest contains nothing of value. This is completely untrue and demonstrates the problem with relying on self regulation under the existing code. I have seen photos, documentation of threatened species and met with a resident of the forest who has spent many years studying this area.

To prevent such misrepresentation there should be a requirement for genuine surveying before the government approves clearing. In this case past surveys by government ecologists identified this area as one to be preserved and protected from logging. How can the government now be complicit in ignoring non-wood values under the present code? They were aware of the threatened species that forestry networks and a firewood seller are now allowed to deny.

The introduction to the code says:

"The object of this Private Native Forestry Code of Practice (the Code) is to ensure that a regular supply of timber products can be maintained indefinitely for present and future generations from privately owned forests and Crown land that is not Crown-timber land within the meaning of the Forestry Act 1916, while at the same time maintaining non-wood values at or above target levels considered necessary by society to prevent environmental harm and provide environmental services for the common good."

Logging native forests in the region to supply Canberra with firewood (the declared aims of the forestry network supporting logging) should not be allowed under the code.

I also question that the logging happening in Mount Rae forest which is verified habitat for a number of threatened species can be considered to either "prevent environmental harm" or "provide environmental services for the common good". This area provides eco system services and biodiversity benefits for the area, helps modify climate, attract rainfall and is an existing carbon store. The future for this forest under the code is as a firewood plantation.

How can the act support increasing biodiversity loss and also claim to be in the common good when logging for firewood can only increase carbon emissions and accelerate predicted global warming? Is the EPA aware that this forestry network claims approval of plans as tacit support for all their scientifically unsubstantiated opinions?

If the EPA is genuine about preventing environmental harm and acting in the common good they would immediately amend the final draft to reflect those values and prevent any more such logging of native forests in the Southern Tablelands as is happening in Mount Rae forest.

Regards



KATE STEWART

