

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

Comments on the Draft Native Forestry Code of Practice for Southern NSW

Dear Environment and Protection Authority,
My knowledge of the present Code for Southern NSW comes from logging in the Mount Rae area. I have visited this area and formed my own opinion that such areas should be preserved for the common good and not logged for firewood for short term gain. I have read many articles in the press over the years and I was amazed when the Department of Conservation's advice on the need to protect this area because it contained rare forest types and rare orchids was ignored and the government backflipped and allowed logging under this code and removed local councillors and local residents objections from the process. The government has claimed that they would hand back decisions that affected local communities to local authorities, but in this case they have done the opposite?

How can a code which has amongst it's objectives maintaining non-wood values at or above target levels considered necessary by society to prevent environmental harm and acting in the "common good" approve logging for firewood in threatened species habitat? The government would declare such a product illegal if it came from overseas.

Local council in Goulburn is trying to discourage firewood use. How can encouraging the clearing of the last tall forests in our region and the promotion of firewood as a greenhouse friendly product to sell in Sydney and Canberra be endorsed by the NSW government and be granted "biocertification".

I am a lifetime member of the [REDACTED] and these areas of existing habitat are necessary to shelter our declining biodiversity. These areas are the focus for landscape connectivity in the region and landcare groups are adding wildlife corridors linking them to other patches, encouraged and sometimes funded by government programs. In a largely modified farming area, where all others are now planting trees why would the government now allow this? It just doesn't make sense?

How does logging the carbon stores and biodiversity banks of the area for firewood meet any of the objectives of the code? The need to preserve Mount Rae forest was recognised by the department of Environment and Conservation in the past. They should be helping those who have joined with the Government under Conservation Agreements and are acting to protect the wildlife of these forested areas, not devising forestry codes which appear to me (and many others) to removed all obstacles in the way of a firewood seller that the government had tried to stop in the past. Why did government scientists tell both him and local council that there was to be no more removal of standing trees in this forest? Why are those who wish to clear forests for firewood rewarded under the code and those who act to protect their biodiversity ignored? What science has changed to allow this about face in the last 5 years and how is logging this area protecting biodiversity when firewood sellers are publicly able to say there is no biodiversity in these forests, nothing of value (apart from firewood) and that they are only helping to improve them? How can they publicly claim government support for this and that the OEH now recognises these absurd statements as facts?

Mount Rae forest is habitat for a number of threatened species . I have visited this forest and also seen independent consultants reports and past government documents verifying this . Australia contains many tree dependent species who require such forests for feeding, nesting , breeding and shelter. Logging these remaining forests in the area cannot be considered as preventing environmental harm when the existing code does not require any environmental surveying and relies entirely on self regulation by firewood sellers . I know from my visits to the Mount Rae area that it contains numerous plant and animal species. What becomes of what the government considers more common animals? Where do the wallabies and wallaroos, wombats , echidnas , parrots , feather tail and sugar gliders go when the ecosystem they rely on is being fragmented and degraded ? Surrounding areas are mainly farm lands supporting pasture , open woodlands being grazed and a few remaining paddock trees.

The code is being used in Mount Rae forest to promote firewood as a somehow eco friendly biofuel , while actually increasing carbon emissions and greenhouse gasses. How is this in the public good ? Has anybody told city consumers that future firewood now comes from native forests and threatened species habitat? What will they say when they find out that the government now gives biodiversity certification to firewood from threatened species habitat? How can any of this be in the common good?

I ask that the draft code be amended to reflect the need for independent professional surveys or that PVP's under the code be handed over to local Catchment Authorities for on ground assessments as all other PVP' are . I also ask that the code be changed so that firewood not be considered one of the timber products deemed 'necessary ' for society. There are many other sources of firewood which do not come from cutting down native forests.

Regards

Pat Day

I request that my address not be published .

P Day
22. 8 2012