

## **Media Release : Limpinwood logging protest**

There is growing anger in the community regarding unauthorised logging and roadworks on a property owned by Hewittville Pty.Ltd in Boormans Rd, Limpinwood between Tyalgum and Chillingham., bordering World Heritage forests .

Dust clouds can be seen and the noise of the logging trucks heard for kilometres from the once quiet, peaceful rural community where residents mostly care deeply about preserving habitat for wildlife.

Some gathered at Boormans Road on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October in response to the lack of effective action by the NSW Environmental Protection Agency ( EPA).

Officers from the EPA and Tweed Shire Council visited the logging site recently, and apparently told the Hewittville proprietor that he may take out logs already cut, but not to cut down more trees until matters are further investigated.

Longtime resident Susie Header said she was told this would mean about 8 more trucks would come out carrying logs. It would appear that Hewittville is being allowed to profit from trees being cut down in an Environmental Protection Zone without authorization."

" This sends a very bad message to other landholders that they can break the rules with impunity," Ms. Header said. "The EPA should hand over compliance to Tweed Shire Council in the short term but the licence needs to be revoked as it is unfair to expect tax payers or ratepayers to continually bear the costs. 5 Government agencies have been involved in compliance issues on this property so far and many of the breaches are being repeated."

Concerned local residents some of whom saw koalas fleeing from the logging and wrote to Minister Upton with their concerns for koalas and other threatened species on the property being logged which include marbled frogmouths, masked owls and glossy black cockatoos.

So far residents have been very disappointed with the response to their letters to the Minister and have complained to local MPs Thomas George and Geoff Provest. Even the urgent request for action from Tweed Shire Council has received no direct response from Minister Upton.

"Since the property was purchased by Hewittville in 2013 there has been repeated unauthorised works resulting in significant environmental damage and multiple pollution events. Hopping Dicks Creek was once home to many platypus, but erosion has silted up their pools." Ms Header said.

On September 7<sup>th</sup> Tweed Shire Councillors voted unanimously to contact the NSW Environment Minister Gabrielle Upton and ask her to revoke the Private Native Forestry Agreement. "We have not heard back from the Minister directly, but the EPA have agreed to a meet with us." Ms Header said.

Ms Reenie Henderson whose house is close to the logging track said, " There is a lot of noise and dust suffered by local residents. I would not have bought this land if I was informed about plans to log nearby."

" Residents are also concerned about safety on our roads with logging trucks driving along Boormans Rd which is a single lane gravel road with blind corners. Danger from the logging trucks travelling around sharp bends on the roads between Limpinwood, Chillingham and Murwillumbah are also a worry,"she said .

Scott Sledge, President of the Northern Rivers Guardians, said that the system of voluntary compliance to the Private Native Forestry Code of Conduct allows landholder to log native forests with no assessment until well after the events and needs to change. "A detailed assessment of native forests for wildlife habitat needs to be done before any future agreements are issued for logging on private land," he said.

"I believe that only a big fine and cancellation of this PNF Agreement will deter rogue operators," " It's time that we shift to plantation forestry."Mr. Sledge said. "The NSW government needs to direct the Council monitor the site. The small fines imposed on Hewittville for previous breaches seem to have had little effect. "

Tweed Mayor Katie Milne has raised the issue of cultural significance in the area, and she called for a comprehensive audit for heritage sites. "About half the property is indicated to have predictive cultural heritage according to Councils Cultural Heritage mapping, as expected being at the base of this sacred Mt Warning / Wollumbin site," she said.

Photo caption: Logging trucks have to negotiate this sharp bend on Boorman's Road.

