



Australians for Animals

PROTECT • NURTURE • RESTORE

Reg. Charity No. CFN12644

PO Box 414, Brunswick Heads 2483 Australia Tel: 61 2 6680 3674 Fax: 61 2 6680 3612 Email: info@australiansforanimals.org.au

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DIRE JUDGEMENT FROM LAND AND ENVIRONMENT COURT ON FORESTS

The last few months have been extremely stressful for all forest activists as we wait for court judgements on a number of legal challenges against the NSW Forestry Corporation.

Australians for Animals Inc., has been deeply involved in several of the extremely complex challenges which are precedental. In other words, no challenge of this nature has been tried before and the outcome will create a precedent.

It was a huge blow to read the judgement of two forest challenges mounted by the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) over Myrtle and Braemar forests – both badly burned in the 2019-2020 bushfires with critically important slowly recovering koala populations.

The grounds of the case against Forestry Corporation included alle-

gations and evidence that the Corporation had failed to consider the environmental impacts of intensive logging. The judgement says that individual harvest plans need not make these considerations.

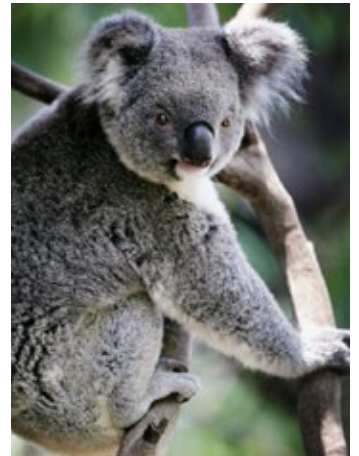
What this means is that the Forestry Corporation has a big green light to destroy whatever it likes. Koalas, gliders, possums, birds, plants, endangered species which have no adequate protection.

AFA is waiting to hear whether an appeal will be launched by the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) who ran the case on behalf of NEFA.

In our discussions with colleague Al Oshlack who runs the Indigenous Justice Action Network (which AFA has worked with for the past three years), we believe an appeal is an absolute priority.

Otherwise, NSW state forests are at extreme risk of collapse and forest wildlife will suffer increasing localized extinctions.

As for the koala, AFA believes it will be a miracle if koalas survive other than in zoos or hospitals. Both the Federal and koala state governments have demonstrated zero intention of protecting habitat.



AFA AND THE MONTREAL PROCESS

The last few months have been extremely stressful for all forest activists as we wait for court judgements on a number of legal challenges against the NSW Forestry Corporation.

In October, an international group of forest experts met in Sydney to discuss the requirements of the Process which sets out the parameters of ecologically sustainable forest management. Australia is a member of this group.

Meeting for the first time in Australia for many years, it was an opportunity to provide evidence of the disastrous, dire situation in NSW and Tasmania forests with neither state meeting the Process requirements. AFA took up the job..

It was important to get letters sent to the Chairperson prior to the meeting setting out the evidence and extent of damage inflicted on biodiversity. And the failure to abide by the Process while governments continue to insist they're in compliance.

We wrote to scientists, environmental organisations, politicians and anyone who might be willing and able to document evidence and send to the Process. Many responded and wrote detailed letters

to the Process Group members – with no responses.

Thankfully, AFA was joined in this effort by the Bob Brown Foundation who helped spread the word and agreed to organize a protest outside the Hyatt hotel in Sydney where the meeting was held.

As well, our co-ordinator, who continues to write environmental articles for Michael West Media and Independent Australia, wrote a number of articles highlighting the importance of this Montreal Process meeting.

GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP

BUT.. the censorship and efforts by the federal and NSW government to ensure that no one could contact a single delegate from the Process were nothing but extraordinary.

AFA wrote to every single member of the Process. No responses. AFA got in touch with the bureaucrats in



Canberra who claimed to be organizing the conference. They refused to provide any timetable, list of speakers and categorically refused access to any Process members.

Another journalist who works for Michael West Media also tried Canberra with the same response. After many efforts he was able to contact the Chairperson in New Zealand who claimed any media interviews with only Process members would only be allowed with permission from Canberra.

Permission denied.

So, both AFA and the journalist tried the Hyatt hotel where the meeting was held to see if we could get any idea of the timing of

functions/meetings. We were told that no information would be provided, that the meeting was strictly confidential.

As you can imagine, it was extremely difficult for the Bob Brown Foundation to organize a protest when we could get zero information on time of lunch, dinner, arrivals.

But the group went ahead anyway and organized a good protest.

So Canberra, NSW and Tasmanian governments are actively prohibiting any public interest or engagement with the Process group. In spite of the fact that the Process insists on public transparency.

This is **OUTRAGEOUS**.

THE GREAT KOALA NATIONAL PARK

It's a sad and shocking reality that the promises of the NSW Labor government to create the Park – which was one of the reasons many voters supported the party in the elections – is nothing more than another failed political promise.

Logging continues in the proposed Park. Penny Sharpe, Environment Minister, declared some koala hubs to be spared from logging but there's no details. What we do know is that some of the areas have no koalas, or small numbers or are forests that are so degraded the habitat is stuffed.

This week and next, the federal government will be holding webinars on its "new environmental legislation plans". AFA will be engaging in the webinar but we have a pretty good idea of where the federal government is heading.

The focus will basically sell nature as offsets for major developments, more forestry, huge urbanization (to accommodate the push by Labor for a population of 50 million). There's no evidence that Labor at the state or federal level has any intention of taking the desperately needed steps to protect koala habitat; stop logging of native forests and stop approving fossil fuel projects.

AFA believes the public has been conned.

In spite of HUGE public protests coming from activists, conservation organizations, scientists, international groups, communities, the Labor governments are hell bent on policies that are anti-environment.

Communities are out there camping, chaining themselves to equipment, sitting high up in trees, going to prison, suffering considerable degradation with no showers, toilets, beds, easily accessible food.. all to try and save the forests and wildlife.

Thousands of dollars have been raised for expert opinions, surveys, providing petrol and gear for forest activists, legal costs.. all the job of governments.

AFA has donated funds to pay for petrol as many community activists are leaving their jobs, instead taking the time to continue their protest.



ARE THERE ANY PLUSSES?

There are not many plusses... but AFA does have access to some great legal help, we know the experts, we have done an extraordinary amount of research and we will continue to try to find a legal challenge that will stop this dreadful destruction of our life support systems.

One of the biggest problems is the failure of the big conservation organizations to focus on massive population growth with the major parties' policies dedicated to 50 million by 2050. 500,000 foreign students and immigrants have come in this year.

This is insanity. Australia is not reaching its carbon emissions target, we can't do that while continuing to give approvals to

the fossil fuel industry and logging native forests. Every person accounts for a minimum of 22 tonnes per person annually.

Mainstream media continues to ignore the plight of forest dwelling species, or of the forests themselves. The judgement which denied any Forestry Corp any environmental responsibility in its harvest plans should be front page news.

PLANTATIONS

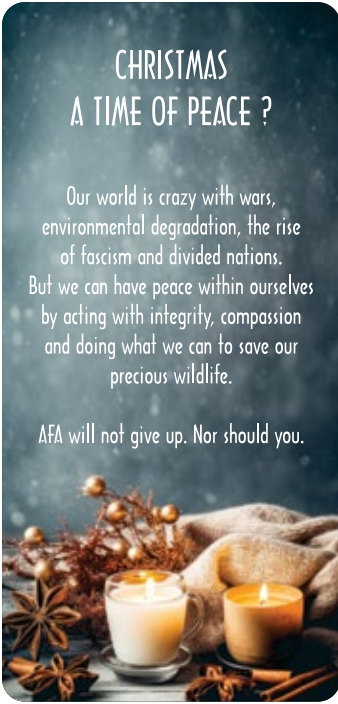
Many wildlife species, particularly koalas and gliders have fled to eucalypt plantations for refuge and shelter.

The plantations are critically important as intensive logging continues in koala hubs.

AFA has been able to give major assistance to a small group of lawyers who are in the process of trying to set up a legal challenge.

This will be a first! The charity was able to assist in engaging senior counsel, strategy and support.

We will keep you posted on whether the challenge gets up in court.



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