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Topic 2. Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values

On 11 January 2023 I emailed a letter to Mr Anshul Chaudhary, Chief Executive Officer of the Forestry Corporation of NSW. Then, on the 16th of that same month, I sent the letter again with corrections to two typographical errors.

I have never received a response to my letter. Some time ago, an officer from NSW Ombudsman told me that the State Forestry Corporation, though it is a state owned corporation, is not within the Ombudsman's remit to investigate failure to respond to public enquiry.

My letter said:

-Ensuring the least burnt portion of the landscape is protected so it can act as refugia..

I write to you about compartments 041 and 043 and Bulga State Forest in general which is currently subject of ahimsa guided community protest with a view to protection of -refugia. from inappropriate logging by the corporation you run. The above quote is from NSW Environment Protection Agency Authority (EPA) 22 September 2020 letter to Forestry Corporation of NSW when you were the acting CEO of the corporation. (The letter was also addressed to the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW).

That same letter from the EPA advised you that, -the unprecedented fires of 2019/20 have significantly impacted the environmental values of the state forests of coastal NSW. Subsequent timber harvesting in areas impacted by fire pose a major environmental risk to the extent that ecologically sustainable forest development management (ESFM), as required under the NSW Forestry Act 2012, is unlikely to be achievable under a business-as-usual approach.. One of the several protections requested by the EPA was what I have quoted at the very beginning of this letter and this measure was followed by one which said, -enhancing corridor connectivity â€¦. The EPA letter also referred to -an independent report by Dr Andrew Smith, an experienced and well-respected forest ecologist. and the finding that there is a -need to develop additional landscape scale conservation measures to regulate the size, location and connectivity of retained environmentally significant areas (ESAs) within state forests over the long termâ€¦.

I am sure you will agree that from the date of the EPA letter (September 2020) up to now does not constitute a sufficient period to qualify it as the -long term. required by the EPA. That is to say, the period is too short for you to consider the Forestry Corporation has sufficiently heeded the long term requirement.

I trust you will conscientiously review the Forestry Corporation's approach to the subject compartments, and the Bulga Forest in general, with a view to conserving the area's environmental significance and, especially, its role as -refugia. for a range of creatures including the koala.

END of LETTER

I hope my recording of this letter and how it was ignored might serve the Panel's assessment of the State Forestry Corporation's capacity to deal with fact based and civic approaches from members of the public on the question of -environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species..