

REPLY FROM FRIENDS OF CHINNOCK TO FORESTS NSW 12 April 2012

As a group, the 'Friends of Chinnock' appreciate the removal of 2108 from the schedules at this stage, and also that Forest NSW recognise the areas environmental value as an example of mature and very diverse Spotted-Gum forest. . The areas ecological values and scenic values definitely need protection. We, as a community are united in our desire to conserve the area and would again urge Forests NSW to provide long term security for this compartment as a flora reserve or some other form of protected area.

With regard to the bushfire threat concerns raised by the community, we have raised our fire threat concerns with the Bega Valley Bushfire Management Committee.

You state in your email that rests NSW only log 1.5% of its reserve area per year. This figure has little relevance in the case of Tanja State forest. As you know, fuel loads in a regional and local sense dictate bushfire intensity, rate of spread, the ability to combat the fire and most importantly, the threat to local communities.

Your response ignores the main point in our submission to the committee which asserts that - if further logging in Tanja State Forest goes ahead the entire area will be less than 30 years old and that low intensity prescribed burning will not remove dense regrowth created by future or previous logging activity.

Low intensity burning may remove some leaf litter and understory fuel but will not return the forest to a more open forest structure, with low fuel load, that presently exists in the more mature areas that were not logged in the 1980's or 1990's.

If further logging occurs in Tanja State Forest dense regrowth will, in ten to fifteen years, be at the levels now seen in the rest of the area and hence this means that almost the entire Tanja SF will present a high fire risk to the local community.

The proposed low intensity burns will not break up this dense tree regrowth. In my opinion, as an experience fire planner and bushfire consultant, the only management action that will negate a long term fire threat developing would be a postponement of logging until previously logged areas regenerate and thin naturally, at least another 20 years, or, to reduce the proposed coup sizes to allow retention of areas of open forest between logging coups to break up dense tree regrowth in the long term. This would hopefully provide areas of lower tree and shrub density to break up fire spread and to allow control activities to take place.

Please advise us as to how you intend achieving this result, as high fuel, dense post logging regrowth, will increase the threat of bushfire to locals in the area and the Tathra Community should your harvest planning not take the problem of unmanaged regrowth into account in the medium to long term. I restate our concern that this issue will not be solved by low intensity pre or post fire burning.