

NVCA News

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NCC calls for help to protect Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks

The Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks are under attack and urgently need your support.

The protective zonings for both the Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks are being reviewed and anti-marine park lobbyists are fighting hard to reduce the protection in these parks.

The government's proposed zoning changes offer some improvements, particularly in the poorly protected Solitary Islands, but do not go far enough for vital reef habitats or iconic aggregation areas for the critically endangered grey nurse shark.

The Nature Conservation Council and National Parks Association's proposals offer strong environmental protection while enabling sustainable fishing across the majority of both parks.

We urgently need you to make a submission to support our improved zoning maps. To assist you in doing so we have prepared an [e-submission form covering both parks](#). We encourage you to add personal comments as this adds significant weight to your submission, allowing it to be considered as an individual submission.

Thanks for your support in protecting these unique areas. - *Nature Conservation Council of NSW*

Sustainable Living Festival Coffs Harbour

The first annual Sustainable Living Festival for the Coffs Coast bursts into life from 13-17 October 2010 promoting a sustainable lifestyle for organisations and families.

The Sustainable Living Festival aims to be a carbon-neutral event that meets best practice in energy management, minimising waste, recycling, eco-printing and biodegradable consumables in food areas. Additionally, people attending the festival are encouraged to travel by public transport or bicycle.

For the full program and bookings go to: www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/slf

Council Matters – A brief overview of relevant Nambucca Shire Council activities

Debate continues over **removal of the mature Kaffir Plum trees along River Street** in Macksville above the riverside park. The foreshore improvements plan prepared by consultants for Council proposed removal of the trees and various improvements to the high profile park including planting of a number of native species and replacement shade trees. What started with a simple request from Joan's Army the hard working volunteer gardening group for a removal of the Kiffirs due to leaf/fruit drop and pedestrian obstruction has morphed into a \$100,000 proposal (funded from 2yrs environment levy revenue (!!)) to upgrade the entire park including treated pine viewing platform and other infrastructure. I support upgrading the park but don't agree with removal of the kaffir plums and replacement with the deciduous exotic poincianas or use of EL \$s for works which do not benefit the natural environment ie infrastructure. Council has received delegations both for and against the kiffirs but at this stage they look like going with the replacement species still in question.

Council is seeking RTA Natural Disaster funding for **interim repairs to the northern section of flood damaged Bellingen Rd** to at least enable safe travel to Bellingen for Spicketts Ck residents who have been cut off from Bowra since the floods. Consultant's report outlines options ranging from repair of both north and south damaged sections to entire closure. Council is yet to make a final decision as to which option it will pursue RTA for funding for. Any option to repair will require extensive studies for new road alignments.

A public workshop is proposed to discuss **options for the stalemated redevelopment plan for Scotts Head Caravan Park**, followed by a Council delegation to the Minister. I did not support a delegation and believe Council's position (with community benefit being its priority) should be negotiated for a mutually agreeable final plan with Land and Property Management Authority (former Lands Dept). LPMA proposes to lease community land for holiday cabin development on Adin Street playing fields as part of its caravan park business. Community opposition continues. All agree that the park/reserve urgently needs upgrading.

A recommendation to seek **NPWS interest in taking over management of the 11ha Boulton's Crossing (Gumma) Reserve** including primitive camping ground and picnic area has been deferred to enable the Council Committee of Management (CoM) time to further discuss the matter. The reserve trust (Council) has managed this areas through its CoM for many years. It is seriously degraded, needing new infrastructure and improved environmental management, especially as it is immediately adjacent to the new Gaagal Wanggaan National Park. Handing over management would relieve ratepayers of upgrading costs whilst providing NPWS with a perfect access point to environmentally sensitive Gaagal Wanggaan and stronger environmental management and protection plus boost local tourism.

Congratulations to Council for **adopting staff recommendations to not remove several trees** (eucalypts and Norfolk Is pines) in two Nambucca Heads locations following site inspections which showed the trees did not pose a threat to life or property.

Council has added a **further \$249K to its multi million dollar budget for the Nambucca Sewerage Treatment Plant upgrade** after being informed it had the space to increase the sludge lagoon capacity to 6months storage volume. - *Provided by Cr Paula Flack*

(Comments in this report are those of Cr Flack and not necessarily Nambucca Shire Council)

Threatened species protection falters in NSW

On National Threatened Species Day (September 7th), the Nature Conservation Council of NSW condemned the NSW government's failure to protect threatened species and ecological communities across the state.

The latest performance review of the NSW State Plan shows not one of the key biodiversity targets vital for the protection of threatened species, from the extent and condition of native vegetation to the eradication or control of invasive species, has improved since 2006.

In fact, some of the most critical goals to halt the decline in biodiversity – the number of sustainable populations of native fauna and the recovery of threatened species and ecological communities – are so off track that they are unlikely to meet 2015 targets. Every time one of these targets is missed, NSW risks losing forever some of its unique species and ecosystems.

In NSW, 1071 native species, populations and ecological communities are listed as threatened with extinction. - *Nature Conservation Council of NSW*

Grassroutes supports Australia 's Unique Bush Corridors

National Parks Association is contributing to the creation of a unique Australia-wide network of bush corridors. These 'grass-routes' are essential to protecting our heritage and native habitats, as well as providing areas for sustainable livelihoods.

A groundswell of action is needed from all Australians - individuals, organisations, businesses, scientists, drivers, politicians and more - to collaborate and contribute towards the conservation, regeneration and sustainability of our unique bush corridors, and to build a common ground for the shared and sustainable use of these habitats.

Visit the [grassroutes website](#) to find out how you can help NPA to achieve this vision.

- *National Parks Association - npansw.org.au*

Gunns faces major hurdles in seeking FSC certification

Small steps have been taken in Australia's highly charged forestry debate - a few in the right direction. A wobbly Gunns has signalled it will seek Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification for the bulk of its managed native forest and plantation estate.

That's significant, as for years Gunns has been a key sponsor of the Australian Forestry Standard, an industry-backed code that accepts the logging of native forest.

FSC is the internationally recognised accreditation program created in the early 1990s to prevent logging of high-conservation-value forests around the world. It is a jealously guarded label, part of the ISEAL Alliance, which also includes Fairtrade, the Rainforest Alliance, the official organic standard and others.

There is a small but growing market for FSC accreditation in Australia. About 200 companies have FSC certification in Australia, including eight forest-management organisations. The FSC regime is used by Bunnings and importer Gunnersens to source sustainably logged timber and wood products.

It is a risk management and marketing tool. Australian Paper's market share jumped when it stopped fighting the environment movement and instead sought FSC certification for many of its office paper brands, including Reflex.

FSC certification is tough. The only native forest hardwood timber supplier in the FSC system is Australian Sustainable Timbers, in NSW's Upper Hunter Valley. No state forest agency has gained FSC.

It is the strict criteria and stakeholder oversight that gives FSC its value. The FSC accreditation process is slow, involving pre and main audits by an approved independent certifier.

Any Gunns application for FSC accreditation will take a long time to determine - two years is typical.

Gunns faces major hurdles. Under FSC principles, any plantation converted from native forest after 1994 is ineligible for accreditation.

Gunns won't say what proportion of its plantations have been converted since 1994, but many of them - especially in Tasmania - were grown on land cleared of old growth forest, often using napalm to burn off waste and 1080 bait to protect seedlings, in a clear case of environmental vandalism.

A possibility might be for Gunns to seek FSC's lesser "controlled wood" status for any plantations converted after 1994, which would mean the wood meets five basic criteria and excludes wood from high-conservation value areas or areas being converted from native forest. Controlled wood can be mixed with FSC-certified material in a "mixed sources" labelled product.

Gunns would have to give up its reliance on native forest timber, but that's been its fallback plan for a decade, the company just needed a shove from the Tasmanian government - a shove which never came. In the end

Swedish partner Sodra appears to have provided the motivation, by making FSC accreditation a condition of its support for Gunns' proposed \$2 billion Bell Bay pulp mill.

Following its acquisition of management rights to the forestry schemes run by the collapsed Great Southern Plantations in January, Gunns said it could feed the pulp mill with 100 per cent plantation timber. But just as environmental objections to the pulp mill were being addressed, Gunns' ability to fund and deliver the project was in doubt again.

Gunns put investors offside when it reported a 98 per cent fall in profit for the December 09 half-year. It didn't help that former chairman John Gay saved himself \$2 million by selling down his own shareholding ahead of the shock earnings result.

Neither the industry nor the forestry union likes it, but Gunns' change of mind demonstrates that FSC will be the world standard for timber accreditation and the Australian forest products industry will have to adjust.

The industry is fighting back. There was a successful push for equal recognition, alongside FSC, of the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS)-certified timber under Greenstar ratings published by the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA). From January 10, developers could get one point (out of a possible 140) for using either FSC or AFS-certified timber. Previously the only standard recognised by the Green Building Council was FSC.

Does that mean a Greenstar-rated building could benefit from using timber sourced from native forests? "Only if it has been grown and managed and followed through a chain of custody to show it has been produced in a sustainable manner," says GBCA's Robin Mellon. That's a yes!

AFS certifies more than 90 per cent of all commercial logging in Australia, including controversial operations in NSW, East Gippsland and Tasmania. GBCA gives one point to either FSC or AFS-certified timbers which meet five "essential criteria", which go to provenance and whether a tree was cut down legally. An extended process is under way to determine "significant criteria" under which a second ratings point might be awarded - to include whether timber is sourced from plantation or native forest.

It is all part of a huge global shift towards certification of forest products. International agreement on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), which was one of the truly positive things to come out of Copenhagen, will provide further impetus.

Developing countries will not be able to tap into hundreds of billions of dollars of REDD funding, unless they stop illegal logging. Legality however, can be over-emphasised - at the present rate the Solomon Islands, for example, may be completely logged out within two years.

It's quite possible for logging to be perfectly legal but completely unsustainable.

The REDD program must have FSC strings attached. - *The Age (March, 2010)*

Thousands vote with their feet for climate action

The rain wasn't able to dampen the energy and enthusiasm of the 10,000 people who gathered for the Walk Against Warming at Sydney's Belmore Park on Sunday 15 August.

Al Gore Climate presenter Nell Schofield told the crowd that Australia's lack of political action on climate change was not only embarrassing but morally reprehensible, and she delivered arguably the 'quote of the day' urging people to vote for climate because "as Al Gore says, politicians are also a renewable resource".

Three community speakers from diverse backgrounds shared personal stories of their grassroots climate work and made passionate calls for greater government action on climate change. - *Nature Conservation Council*

Thumbs down for Palm Oil

Global demand for palm oil, a main ingredient in processed foods as well as soap and cosmetics, is causing wholesale clearing of ancient rainforests, forcing indigenous people off their land and pushing orangutans and other species to the brink of extinction to make room for palm oil plantations.

Rainforests are drained and cleared, and as they dry, their peat-filled soils release large amounts of methane, a greenhouse gas that has a global warming impact 23 times greater than CO₂. The cleared forest is then highly susceptible to long-burning fires which emit large quantities of carbon. Illegally lit peat-land fires in Borneo have for years been one of the largest global sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

The development of new palm oil plantations is commonly associated with social conflict and human-rights' abuses. Most of the area developed is customary land owned by indigenous peoples and local communities. In the name of the 'national interest', communities are being forced to give up their land, often against their will and without adequate compensation.

Palm oil has been touted as a 'greener' fuel, but when the benefits are weighed against the ecological harm done as a result of land clearing for plantations, as a bio-fuel, palm oil is a failure.

For more information, and to find out what you can do visit - www.palmoilaction.org.au

Meeting Venue

Monthly meetings of the Nambucca Valley Conservation Association Inc. are held on the last Thursday of each month, with the venue for the next meeting usually being decided at the end of each meeting. For the next meeting date and venue go to www.nvca.org.au or email The Secretary at nvca@nvca.org.au