

## FOREST MANAGEMENT

*The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment. Whether at a national or global level, the economy exists inside the environment—the ecosystem. It's a box inside a circle, if you like. All human activity—all our producing and consuming—depends directly on the natural environment. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the shelters we build and the energy we use all come from the ecosystem that surrounds us.*

*Much of our economic activity involves misusing, overusing and abusing the natural environment. We've done great damage to our soil, rivers and aquifers, we've destroyed much habitat and many species, and now the world's overuse of fossil fuels is playing havoc with the climate.<sup>1</sup>*

### Carbon for Climate

Strategic approaches to native forest use now, as compared to 20–100 years ago, should be redefined. Given our new scientific and empirical knowledge of climate change and carbon emissions <sup>2</sup>, if Australia doesn't form a new theory-to-practice approach to forest management, it would seem that we are denying what is happening around us.

Since the introduction of a carbon price, the definition of the term 'forest use' has been turned on its axis. Opportunities afforded by a price on carbon, and the influence of climate change, throw a whole different light on decision making for forest use. Australia's governing bodies should endeavour to emulate the global ideologies which drive the need for conservation, restoration and protection of our native forests and all they contain <sup>3</sup>.

The emergence of climate change and emissions reduction, as both global and national issues, offers the potential for an alternative funding and working model for native forest management. Proper recognition needs to be afforded to the carbon stored in standing native forests and the role this could play in a national carbon emissions reduction scheme. This will require innovative and progressive political leadership.

### Forest Restoration for Jobs and Wildlife

Speakers at the World Parks Congress, Sydney, 2014, admonished that we should not give up on distressed ecosystems but push for conservation, push for connectivity using examples from other countries, and focus on restoration of degraded landscapes. Dynamic and practical methodologies for environmental protection involve: expediting conservation programs; learning from Indigenous people's land management practices; attracting volunteers; understanding the conservation lexicon; using more efficient wildlife tracking technology—even satellites; and creating smarter economic models. Ecotourism has successfully replaced logging industries in many countries. Congress evidence showed that Australia may be the last country on earth to stop logging native forests.

The Great Southern Forest advocates investment in a new critically needed forest restoration industry in public forests. Jobs are required for:

- creating tree nurseries and silviculture for connecting fragmented landscapes
- caring for critically endangered small isolated colonies of koalas
- installing breeding boxes for hollows-dependent species whose habitats have been destroyed<sup>4</sup>

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- controlling pests, weeds and feral animals (dogs, cats, foxes, etc.) and fighting diseases <sup>1</sup>
- implementing fire management strategies and fire train maintenance
- maintaining existing, removing or replacing infrastructure
- installing of signs
- grading and repairing roads
- managing vegetation on roads/trails/walking tracks
- installing and maintaining fencing

### Tourism for Jobs

In the Bega Valley and Eurobodalla Shires, tourism contributes more economic benefit than the combined traditional resource-based industries of forestry, fisheries and agriculture<sup>5</sup>. Growth in tourism in both Shires well exceeds growth projections for national domestic tourism. These Shires, with Shoalhaven, the Monaro and East Gippsland (Victoria), work in partnership to deliver nature-based tourism experiences.

Tourism Australia's<sup>6</sup> research has repeatedly identified 'immersion in nature' as the primary motivator for travel, across all of Australia's inbound and domestic markets. The natural beauty of the southern region forms the heart of the tourist experience.

### Rethinking Forest Management

Ideals of a GSF-led management approach supplant a State's forest-led management approach by applying the following principles:

- forests are most productive if left in the ground <sup>7</sup>
- a dollar value can be measured for carbon sequestration
- forests should be valued for water, soil conservation, wildlife habitat and aesthetic qualities
- native forest jobs could relate to ecotourism, connection, protection and reforestation, and weed, disease and feral animal eradication
- Australia can improve its ranking of 7<sup>th</sup> in terms of habitat conversion, 10<sup>th</sup> for natural forest loss <sup>8</sup> and improve its poor rate as a carbon emitting country
- loggers recognise that some State forests have been logged too many times to recover
- logging practices destroy wildlife habitat.

This approach to sustainable jobs in and tourism and forest restoration for wildlife, and saving carbon emissions from not logging for climate benefit, would be mutually beneficial and complementary.

Around the world, native forests are being protected, tree nurseries are being created to restore degraded forestlands and increase seed production, mangroves are being innovatively re-established to help purify waterways, wildlife is being monitored, forests are being connected, seed banks of resilient species are being established, tourists are paying to see the new restored landscapes and wildlife, extraction industries are being discarded, Indigenous people are adapting practices to counter the effects of climate change, and youth are being drawn into conservation activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Such as the destructive post-logging fungus *Armillaria luteobubalina* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armillaria\\_luteobubalina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armillaria_luteobubalina)



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The temperature graph has peaked and it can fall. The world has woken up and gone into action. It is Australia's turn.

*Bronte Somerset*

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- <sup>1</sup> Gittins, R., (2015) Economists' concerns with emissions reduction target not what you'd expect. August 18, 2015. SMH <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/economists-concerns-with-emissions-reduction-target-not-what-you-d-expect-20150818-gj1h98.html>
  - <sup>2</sup> Per capita of greenhouse gas emissions of world countries, Australia ranked 9th in 2000, and 5th in 2005 and 2012.
  - <sup>3</sup> *Essential Philosophies Drive Global Conservation*, World Parks Congress, IUCN. Nov. 2014 <http://www.serca.org.au/research/2015/World%20Parks%20Congress.pdf>
  - <sup>4</sup> Goldingay, R.L., and Stevens, J.R. (2009) Use of artificial tree hollows by Australian birds and bats. *Wildlife Research* 36, 81–97. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/WR08064>
  - <sup>5</sup> Destination NSW. <http://www.destinationnsw.com.au>
  - <sup>6</sup> Tourism Australia. <http://www.tourism.australia.com>
  - <sup>7</sup> Dr. Frances Perkins worked as an economist in Canberra for 30 years for Treasury, the Department of Foreign Affairs and at the ANU. Dr. Perkins has launched a critique of the economics of native forest logging ... saying that the forests are more valuable for carbon credits than logged timber. <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/forests-more-valuable-for-carbon-ex-treasury-official/5274300>
  - <sup>8</sup> Top 10 Countries Killing the Planet. Care 2 <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/top-10-countries-ruining-the-planet.html#ixzz3btG9VSYG>