

Save Wallaroo State Forest!



Another Quarry in Port Stephens is too much for any Koala to bear!

A coalition of community groups met in Raymond Terrace on Friday 11 August 2023. The group were part of state-wide peaceful actions^{1 2} drawing attention to the unsustainable management of NSW State Native Forests.

“Public studies show that most people want to see our native forest estate protected not logged. The Great Koala National Park up north won’t be much chop for koalas if Forestry Corporation continues their industrial scale logging practices” said Carmel Northwood from Koala Koalition EcoNetwork Port Stephens (KKEPS).

“Shockingly, in 2018 the previous government agreed to licence a very large section of Wallaroo State Forest at Balickera to a quarry developer. If that quarry goes ahead, it will severely compromise existing wildlife corridors that link Port Stephens with the Mid Coast region. This is shameful because Forestry Corporation is meant to protect and sustain our natural native environment and all the wildlife that depend on it, including koalas. The quarry developers have photographed koalas, squirrel gliders and brush-tailed phascogales in and near the development area, including in the threatened forest areas they intend to clear fell first.”

Anna Kerr, a spokesperson for Save Balickera Incorporated, a group representing residents in the area where the quarry is proposed, said: *“People are saying enough is enough when it comes to quarries. These are big, noisy, polluting, heavy traffic inducing operations that are being approved in rural areas in the Port Stephens hinterland. Our area is being decimated before our eyes. It’s not just locals concerned by this – the projected, massive increase in heavy vehicle movements will directly impact anyone who is a regular user of the Pacific Highway between Karuah and Newcastle.”*

“We’re here today as concerned residents and members of various local community groups, including the Hunter Community Environment Centre. We have asked our MP to take our concerns to the relevant Ministers whose portfolios are responsible for ensuring our public lands, our State Forests, remain a valued resource for now and future generations. Licensing any part of the NSW public lands estate to a private consortium for profit is a short-sighted strategy and an injustice to the environment and the community. A massive quarry in Wallaroo State Forest should not be allowed. The harm it will cause is immeasurable”.

Representatives from Save Balickera Inc., Koala Koalition Econetwork Port Stephens (KKEPS), Boomerang Park Preservation Group, Hunter Community Environment Centre (HCEC), VOWW, MidCoast & Gloucester Knitting Nannas and others joined the action organised by EcoNetwork.

¹ <https://bobbrown.org.au/campaigns/native-forests/> , <https://defendthegiants.org/events/> ,

² <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/jul/26/labor-push-for-publicly-owned-plantations-to-end-native-forest-logging>

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