

GRANGE STATE FOREST REVISITED

Remember this?



A Recap

The Scandalous logging of old-growth endangered Lowland Rainforest at Grange State Forest was first discovered by Joe, a Clarence Environment Centre member, in mid 2010, and following further investigation by our team was reported to the investigation unit of the then Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW).

The scandal started with Forests NSW's harvest plan which, incredibly, mapped the rainforest as Blackbutt - Scribbly Gum despite neither species being present. In fact the forest was typical Lowland Rainforest with Brush Box, Flooded Gum and Turpentine as dominant species, along with Strangler Figs, White Apple, Tamarind, White Elderberry, Bangalow, and Walking Stick Palms prominent throughout.

Admitting their investigators do not have the expertise to identify endangered ecological communities, DECCW employed an independent botanist who confirmed our allegations. That report was presented to DWCCW in September 2010.

It is our contention that everyone involved in the operation, from the foresters that marked up the forest for logging, to the ecologists who supposedly assessed the flora and fauna before logging; the contractors, and in all likelihood, the receiving timber mills, would have known that this was not a legal operation.

We have been told that the investigation unit intends to recommend prosecution of Forests NSW in the Land and Environment Court. Of course, there is no guarantee that the recommendation will result in prosecution, and ten months after receiving confirmation that a protected endangered ecological community had been logged, DECCW has still not acted to litigate.

On the first anniversary of our first reporting the illegal logging, we revisited the site with our film unit. If we had expected to find some rehabilitation work had been undertaken, we were to be disappointed. Where the destruction had been a wasteland of mud and logging debris, the discarded tree crowns are now hardly visible under a mass of mostly introduced weeds. [View our journey – click here](#)



One of a network of muddy snig tracks



reduced to a mass of weeds 12 months on

The weed mass, much of it reaching well over two metres, includes Lantana; a range of *Solanum* species such as Blackberry Nightshade; Stinging Nettle, and a variety of other introduced species which are choking any possible regeneration.

This will now be another test for the O'Farrell State Government which, based on the abysmal environmental record it has compiled after just 3 months in government, gives us little hope of seeing justice done.

In short, a couple of weeks of destruction by Forests NSW undid what it took nature many hundreds of years to create, the damage so great that the forest may never recover to its original state. The following images show the stark reality.



This image adjacent to logged forest at Grange is what a rainforest looks like (red paint on tree shows the edge of the logging zone).



In the logging zone however, a few minutes with a chain saw sees hundreds of years of nature's investment reduced to this.



Finally, weeds take over, with Bell Miner Associated Dieback the likely consequence, making it almost impossible for this forest to ever return to its former glory.

This atrocious act should not go unpunished, but even if found guilty, as Forests NSW was over multiple breaches including rainforest destruction at Yabbra State Forest in early 2010, none of those responsible will lose their jobs or pay the fines. Ultimately, those fines are nothing more than a cynical exercise of shuffling funds from one section of government to another, with tax-payers footing the legal costs.

Once again it seems that only the lawyers benefit, with the environment, and members of the public, who actually own these forests, being the biggest losers!

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Honorary Secretary
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