

Tim Morris MP

Member for Lyons
Tasmanian Greens

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Wednesday, 27 February 2008

The Hon Peter Garrett MP
Minister for Environment
C/- Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

RE: Request for Urgent Review of Impact of Logging Operations in area Containing Wedge-tailed Eagle Nest – Possible Controlled Action

I write to request your Department undertake an urgent review of a planned logging operation on Forestry Tasmania coupe TN 026C, in the area known as Canaways Creek. The logging operations is planned to be undertaken over several years and involves the construction of several logging access roads, a clearfell cable harvest followed by a high intensity regeneration burn (from a helicopter), and reforestation activity. All of this activity will occur directly adjacent to a newly discovered Wedge-tailed Eagle nest.

Forestry Tasmania documents also reveals additional harvesting will occur on other coupes closer to this nest in the coming years.

I am receipt of a the final copy of the Forest Practices Plan for this coupe [JWB0408]– it is yet to receive final certification, however Forestry Tasmania has informed it intends to commence the construction of a logging access road on 3rd of March.

I believe that this planned activity must be immediately reviewed by specialists in your Department to ascertain compliance with the *Threatened Tasmanian Eagles Recovery Plan 2006-2010* before any works commence, especially when one considers that although the identification of eagles nest has improved –yet data also reveals a high proportion of inactive nests and a decrease in breeding pairs. All of which has occurred despite the national recovery plan and associated management prescription being in place since 1998.

The Tasmanian Eagle Recovery Plan (2006-2010) contains objectives relevant to this operations, they are:

Overall Objective

To increase the breeding success of both eagle species by protecting nesting habitat from destruction, modification and disturbance.

Specific Objectives

3: reduce the proportion of nests subject to disturbance

6: increase number and density of active territories

9: implement prescriptive nest reserves for conserving nest habitat

The recovery plan also goes as far as to identify threats as being specifically the loss of nesting habitat, and disturbance.

The plans related to TN 026C demonstrate only partial compliance with recovery plan objectives. It is not enough to identify a nest on a map, and to write it is a reserve, when the actually activity which meets any reasonable persons definition of disturbance is permitted to occur close by. What is most concerning is the disturbing activities of road construction and logging activity – plus a burning program over several years; I contend the ongoing planned disturbance will virtually guarantee the area which is currently proven to be suitable nesting, breeding and foraging habitat for the species, will be made uninhabitable as a direct outcome of intensive forestry.

In effect this planned activity will the objective of:

*To **decrease** the breeding success of both eagle species by **not protecting** nesting habitat for from destruction, modification and **disturbance**.*

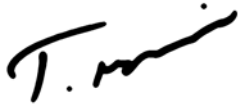
It is important to point out the forest practices planning system management prescriptions for the Wedge-tailed Eagle have been in place for several years, yet have clearly failed to increase the carry capacity of areas known to be suitable habitat. These prescriptions are demonstrably inadequate to meet recovery plan objectives, however they have been applied to this coupe.

I suggest part of the Department's deliberations pertaining to this request for a review, should include the assessment of the 2 years of data collected under the current recovery plan which address *eagle breeding and dynamics*, to ascertain whether or the preliminary results of such studies provide useful indicators as to the impact of this planned activity. And also that serious consideration is given to whether or not this activity is in fact a controlled action under the Environment Protection Bio-diversity Conservation Act.

I have enclosed a document set pertaining to this matter for your attention and reference. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you require any additional information.

I also request to be informed in a timely manner of what actions you have taken in relation my request.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Morris', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Morris MP
Greens Shadow Minister for Native Forests
Member for Lyons
CC Senator Bob Brown
CC The Hon Greg Hunt, Shadow Minister for Environment
Cc Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister of Australia