

Narooma News

Night attack on forest tree-sitter at Narooma

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CONSERVATIONISTS on Monday prevented logging operations from continuing in the foothills of Gulaga Mountain by suspending an elevated platform in a tree supported by cables attached to logging machinery.

In a sinister twist, the platform with the protestor still up the tree was cut down by unknown individuals late on Monday night.

The protest started on Monday morning when a female protestor sat on the platform over 10m off the ground and a banner stating "Carbon Criminals" was suspended off logging machinery.

South East Forest Rescue (SEFR) representatives presented Forests NSW and the logging contractors with a "Statement of Guarantee".

The statement set out terms and conditions requiring Forests NSW to guarantee there will be no impacts on the environment as a result of the logging and "to guarantee any logging Forests NSW and their authorised contractors undertake will not impact on the health and wellbeing of the citizens of New South Wales, being both present and future unborn generations."

The logging contractor refused to sign the guarantee.

Narooma police were then called to the scene on Rats Head Road in the Bodalla State Forest.

The protestors were given a direction to leave the area and all but the woman on the platform complied, so the local officers called in the Police Rescue Squad from Cooma, who arrived that afternoon.

Police Rescue Squad officers deemed it was unsafe to remove the woman, so they secured the platform using another tree to prop it up, freeing up the logging machinery.

It was too late in the day for logging contractors to start work and police left the scene leaving the woman alone on the platform.

Later on in the evening, unknown persons in a 4WD utility axed down the tree that the rescue squad had used to anchor the platform.

"A high-powered spotlight was shone on the tree-sit whilst the assailants silently axed down the anchor tree," SEFR's Lisa Stone said.

"This act of extreme cowardice could have resulted in a fatality. The tree-sitter managed to avoid injury by alighting from the tree-sit and clinging onto a branch whilst the platform crashed to the ground."

Ms Stone alleged the contractors tasked to this new compartment repeatedly violated environmental regulations.

"In Dampier State Forest, Nerrigundah, where these contractors were previously, we found debris deliberately and carelessly pushed against habitat trees putting these trees at risk of fire," she said.

"Rainforest was logged and feed trees felled. We are asking for a guarantee that this criminal behaviour will not happen again.

"The harvest plan in Dampier stated the logging was supposed to be 'single tree selection', but the intensity of the logging we witnessed was outrageous," Ms Stone said. "Old-growth forest, ecologically-mature forest, was logged. Clear felled hillsides are not any form of environmental protection. There is now serious adverse impacts to the many threatened species of the area, and the water catchment."

Logging operations resumed on Tuesday morning in the absence of any protestors.



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Background to Silently Axing a Tree – Narooma News 16 February 2011

In a news story with a lead-in and content more suited to an Agatha Christie fiction piece, the Narooma news broke the story of alleged reckless conduct endangering life.

A few questions that the reporter needed to ask include:

Were police on patrol in the area? Answer: Yes

How can you “silently axe a tree”? Answer: You can’t

Given the alleged near death experience of the tree- sitter, why was a formal complaint not lodged with the police immediately?

Answer: Because we made it up for a media headline. While the journalist did not see through the fabrication, the police would have.

See Ms Stone dodge the question: *How do you silently axe a tree?*

http://youtu.be/HwAhwW_VDs4



The Bodalla Tree-Sit



The Tree-Sit After Being Silently Axed Overnight

