

SouthEastTIMBERassociation

Glenbog State Forest Wombats – A Case Study

The following case study has been prepared to highlight how activists use a range of social media to communicate their story. Honesty takes a back seat, as much of their success comes from their ability to prey on the ignorance of the general public. This strategy helps create a campaign to gain public support for their objective of a total cessation of native forest harvesting.

In early 2014, planning commenced for harvesting in the Glenbog state forest. A property adjacent to the area to be harvested is a wildlife sanctuary that appears to specialise in raising and releasing orphaned wombats. This might explain the extraordinary number of wombat burrows that were found in the proposed harvest area.

As a result of concerns for the wombats, additional conditions were imposed to minimise the potential impact of harvesting and haulage on the resident wombats.

As harvesting progressed, allegations began to be made on Face book pages, blogs, political and petition web sites.

<https://theglengogblog.wordpress.com/>

https://www.facebook.com/marie.wynan?fref=tl_fr_box&pnref=lhc.friends

<https://www.facebook.com/TheGlenbogBlog>

<http://davidshoebridge.org.au/2014/08/20/careless-killing-of-wombats-in-glenbog-state-forest/>

<http://davidshoebridge.org.au/2014/10/15/9402/>

<http://davidshoebridge.org.au/2014/10/29/glenbog-state-forest-speech/>

<https://www.communityrun.org/petitions/investigate-and-bring-to-justice-the-killers-of-the-marsupial-massacre-in-glenbog-state-forest?source=twitter-share-button>

The petition site above states:

“Marie and Ray Wynan, members of the Wombat Protection Society, have been reporting a logging operation in the Glenbog State Forest in southern New South Wales which caused up to 150 bare-nosed wombats to be buried alive by purposefully destroying and covering their burrows.”

In a few clicks of a mouse button, the story has moved from a concern for wombat welfare to posts with increasing levels of lies and misrepresentations.

The South East Timber Association (SETA) has a number of members who have raised orphaned native animals over past decades and strongly support people who make the enormous time commitment that is needed to raise or rehabilitate orphaned and injured native birds, mammals and reptiles.

SETA does not support those people and organisations that slander and libel people in the timber industry to progress political campaigns.

The links above show how easily activists can spread lies and misrepresentations to an international audience. When local activists link with overseas activists, the comments radiate to a new audience, who might think they are dealing with honest people.



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“A logging company in New South Wales, Australia has buried at least 150 bare-nosed wombats while they were still alive.”

The above fiction was written by Georgina B.

Before dealing with some of the lies and misrepresentations, lets put the Glenbog wombat protection issue into the broader context of wombat welfare.

One condition that was imposed on the Glenbog operation was that haulage of logs was only permitted during daylight hours, to minimise the risk of any wombat being killed or injured by traffic from the harvesting site.

To contrast this condition, below are photos taken one afternoon on a 7 kilometer section of country road, which has no logging traffic and typically less than 30 vehicle movements a day.



Despite the obvious kill rate, no one has requested daylight only travel on this road. Recently, in one night, 2 wombats were killed on the Princes Highway between Eden and the Victorian border. Where is the outrage from the activists and Mr Shoebridge about this daily carnage across eastern Australia.

A read of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) report following completion of the Glenbog harvesting operation is significantly different to the allegation that at least 150 wombats were buried alive.

“Over 150 wombat burrows were identified, flagged and mapped, with more than 80 of these in areas that were already protected from logging due to various landscape exclusion zones.”



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“FCNSW also voluntarily agreed to exclude a further six-hectare area from logging where high densities of wombat burrows had been identified. This area adjoined a neighbouring wildlife sanctuary.”

“In August 2014, FCNSW finalised logging operations in Glenbog State Forest. EPA officers have since returned to the site, met with locals and made a comprehensive post-logging inspection. They observed that the six-hectare area remained unlogged, wombat burrows were largely protected and logging had not occurred in existing landscape exclusion zones. Wombats moving about the area were also sighted.”

<http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/forestagreements/GlenbogWombats.htm>

FACT CHECK.

Information from the Wombat Information Centre states:

“The burrow's diameter is about the same size as the wombat and can be up to 20 inches wide, large enough for a small person to crawl into. Although wombats just fit in their burrows, they are agile and can turn around in them.”

“Wombats have burrows for different purposes. [Bare-nosed wombats](#) may have up to 12 burrows each, with 3 or 4 of these being main burrows. Some of these may be shared with other wombats, with each wombat using the burrow at a different time.”

Given the abnormally high population due to the sanctuary release program, lets assume there is actually one wombat living in each burrow. Say 155 burrows, with over 80 in protected areas. At least 14 more burrows are in the 6 hectare additional exclusion area. This leaves about 60 burrows, including the phantom burrow allegedly covered by an access road, within the harvest area.



If every burrow had one wombat occupant, and every burrow was bulldozed, this would equate to a maximum of 60 buried wombats.

If any burrows had been “purposefully destroyed” as alleged by the less than honest creators of one malicious petition, why was this not covered in the EPA report? Why has the RSPCA not been called in? Why have police not been call in?

Like many activist claims, the allegations do not stand up to any reasonable level of questioning. At another harvesting operation, an activist issued s press release alleging a protestor was almost killed when a tree was “silently axed.” The allegation was printed



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without question by the Narooma News. When the activist was questioned about the allegation, avoiding the question was the only response she could make. Exaggeration and lies are not new to the activist fraternity. It is normal business when it comes to gaining publicity for their campaigns.

http://youtu.be/HwAhwW_VDs4

As the contractor working in the wombat block and the FCNSW supervisor located and protected burrows not marked by the activists and made every endeavour to avoid the others, the allegations show the dishonesty of activists extends to personal denigration against individuals who have not had an effective way of challenging these lies in the past.

<http://www.chipstop.savetheforests.org.au/GIPA-4.pdf>

<http://www.chipstop.savetheforests.org.au/GIPA-10.pdf>

The SETA website will correct some of the many lies and misrepresentations made by activists.

Note: Link and other details are current at October 2015

