



## VALLEY WATCH INC

P.O. BOX 637, YAMBA 2464

valleywatchinc@gmail.com Phone 0488 979 196

Creating a sustainable future

## World Forests Day Protest, Grafton

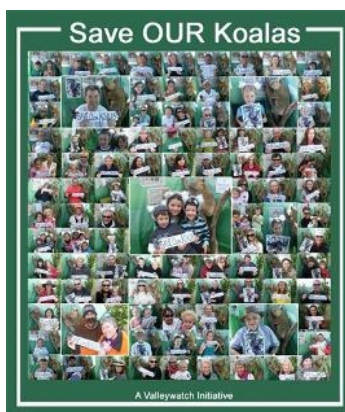


The North Coast Environment Council together with the North East Forest Alliance held a protest rally outside the Grafton Offices of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) on Monday March 21 to highlight the lack of progress in the resolution of problems with forestry regulation on both public and private land.

Four members of Valley Watch - Athena Batchelor, Cath Clark, Carolyn Jeckeln and Ros Woodward - travelled to Grafton in support of the protest.

The purpose of the protest on World Forests Day was to highlight the failure by DECCW to monitor the actions of the timber industry on both public and private land where old-growth forests, rainforest, endangered ecological communities and core koala habitat were still being subjected to logging.

At the conclusion of the protest a list of demands was handed to Greg Lollback, head of DECCW's Private Native Forestry Unit, by Valley Watch's Ros Woodward and Mark Selmes of Crookwell wearing koala costumes, to be forwarded to Lisa Corbyn, Director General of DECCW.



Remember this Valley Watch initiative?

In 2003 Valley Watch began to press Maclean Council to adopt a Koala Management Plan for Ashby, Woombah and Iluka. Clarence Valley Council agreed in 2008 but it was not until 2010 that a Plan was finally drafted by the new Council.

In November 2010 Valley Watch made a substantial submission to Clarence Valley Council to improve the Draft Plan based on an enormous amount of work by our former Secretary, Cath Clark.



Ros Woodward and Mark Selmes preparing to hand a list of demands to the head of DECCW's Private Native Forestry Unit

More koala information at [http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/cp\\_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-BOT-56-78-22&c=421](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-BOT-56-78-22&c=421)

We're on the Web! Visit us at [clarencevalleywatch.com](http://clarencevalleywatch.com)

## Valley Watch Projects January - March 2011

### Flying foxes

One of Valley Watch's objectives is "to raise public awareness of environmental issues through the provision of information, advice and education". To this end we bought a dozen copies of *Stellaluna* and donated one to each primary school in the lower river to promote a greater awareness of the crucial role of flying foxes in our ecology.

We were disappointed that Luke Hartsuyker, the member for Cowper, introduced a private member's bill into Federal Parliament which in effect removes the Federal Minister for the Environment from any decisions regarding dispersal of the flying foxes at Maclean High School.

We therefore wrote to every Senator with an excellent letter from Linda Wright, our representative on the Maclean Flying-fox Working Group which had concluded that dispersal is not a feasible option in the short or long term.

### Unexplained clearing

In December 2010 VW reported clearing at Gulmarrad which we believed was done without approval and we had the satisfaction of learning that DECCW has fined the landholder and ordered that the area be rehabilitated, as well as issuing a formal Warning Letter.

In March 2011 VW noticed some clearing in Carrs Drive, West Yamba, which also looked suspicious. Council acted promptly in issuing a stop-work order and is undertaking legal action over the clearing.

### Support for EDO

The Environmental Defender's Office (EDO) is a great organisation. It's a not for profit legal centre that specialises in public interest environmental law.

VW was pleased to provide a testimonial for it as it seeks funding from the Law Society of NSW. Learn more at [www.edo.org.au](http://www.edo.org.au).

### Wooloweyah Draft Fire Protection Strategy

Valley Watch prepared a major submission on the proposed Fire Protection Strategy for Wooloweyah. Because of its unique location and topography there are a number of vegetation communities that support an endangered population - the Coastal Emu - as well as threatened fauna. We argued that mosaic burning would introduce weeds and reduce the integrity of the existing biodiversity and thus promote fire risk.

Thank you to those members who also sent individual submissions.

### Amendment to Council's DCP re Native Vegetation

In a separate email on April 5 and again on April 13 I drew to the attention of members the proposed amendment to Council's DCP (Development Control Plan) which is euphemistically described as being for the *preservation* of native vegetation.

The worrying thing for many of us is the list of exemptions. Among them is one that allows clearing within twenty metres of a dwelling with no necessity for a permit or development consent:

*E5.1 Neither a vegetation works permit or development consent is required for the ringbarking, cutting down, topping, lopping, pruning, removal, injury or wilful destruction of any plant or tree that is native vegetation in the following situations:*

*i.) where the base of the trunk or stem is within 20 metres of the face of a lawful existing dwelling house.*

For an amendment which claims "to provide a framework for the preservation of native vegetation", this particular exemption and the others associated with it seem to me to be an invitation for wholesale clearing in certain areas.

### Your Committee

<b>President:</b>	Gary Whale
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Athena Batcheldor
<b>Secretary:</b>	Ronwyn Lopez
<b>Treasurer:</b>	David Lopez
<b>Committee:</b>	Gary Brisbane Carolyn Jeckeln Barbara Whale Ros Woodward

### Valley Watch recognised at Australia Day awards

Valley Watch was one of five community organisations to be nominated for a Clarence Valley Australia Day Award.

Its citation read, in part:

*In existence since 1991, [Valley Watch] actively monitors local government policies and decisions and has been influential in Council's adoption of a 2010 Biodiversity Strategy, the 2010 LEP (Local Environmental Plan) and the 2010 Draft Koala Management Plan.*

Other organisations nominated were the Clarence Valley Physical Culture Club, the Maclean/Lower Clarence Hospital Auxiliary, the Osprey Day Club and St Catherine's Villa, Grafton

The winner was the Osprey Day Club, Yamba.

### Yamba River Market

As it has done for many years, Valley Watch has a stall at the Yamba Market. We have books to sell and magazines to give away which attracts people to look at our displays and buy a raffle ticket or two.

It really gives us a boost when members and supporters drop by for a chat. Stop by and say "G'day" at the next market on Easter Sunday, April 24.

What do you think of the idea of a newsletter instead of minutes? Send any comments to:

[valleywatchinc@gmail.com](mailto:valleywatchinc@gmail.com)

*Gary*