



Title	Ms
First name	Gayle
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I am making this submission as	Resident
Submission type	Personal
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	
Consent to make submission public	Public
Your story	<p>I have lived in Billys Creek for 39 years. I chose to buy property here because it is a wonderland of biodiversity and beauty which reflects the creator, rather more than it does humanity's destructive plundering of said creation. A place to bring children into the world where they could grow in appreciation of the spirit of the creator. My aim was to protect this small patch of rain forest from the logging industry. Many new neighbours moved here with similar love of this unique environment in the following years. We have in the past fought 2 major battles against State Forestry with some success, though it became obvious early on that State Forestry has never been interested in anything but lumber. I remember speaking to them about 35 years ago; asking why they were logging the same area only a couple of years after smashing their way through the rain forest for the biggest hardwoods. They said they they had to fulfill their contracts. Since then it has not stopped. They keep coming back for smaller</p>

and smaller trees.

THEY ALWAYS LEAVE HUGE PILES OF TIMBER. Unbelievable piles of what they deem to be waste.

STATE FORESTS HAVE ENCOURAGED INDISCRIMINATE BURNING BY CATTLE FARMERS, which takes place every year.

This burning EVERY YEAR has been encroaching on rain forest, turning what was previously not burnable moist softwood country into stands of eucalyptus with under-stories of long grass and fire prone fuel.

This is the symbiotic relationship of State Forests with local graziers. The graziers get more grass, State forests get more hardwood.

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY CONCERN FOR THIS UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT BY STATE FORESTRY.

As the drought became the worst in living history in this area, the creeks died up. The rain forests became crunchy underfoot. The canopy became sparse as the forest giants dropped most of their leaves. Some trees died of thirst. We were putting out water for the wildlife long before the fires came.

It was around the 7th Sept that the skies turned violent. Never have we seen such a storm of smoke.

Some say it was caused by lightening. I know that's not true. We would all have noted any sign of a cloud, let alone a storm, as that is what everyone was looking for every day. Some idiot had lit up on the other side of Guyfaulks Gorge, and there was no stopping what they'd started.

Ash rained down, and then embers. Myself and my sons worked our bums off reducing fire hazard around the house and yards.

We got the fire pumps ready, filled the gutters, filled the trailer and cars with what we could take, and evacuated at 2am. We drove to Tyringham fire shed to get the gen. It was terrifying. There were trees blown down over the road. The sky was flashing purple and red, there was a freezing cold gale-force wind driving the fire toward our community. There were many cars parked at the fire shed. People huddled inside looking scared. The road to Dorriggo was closed. They said the road north was not safe either.

We decided to risk the road north rather than stay in that Armageddon. The boys went back and grabbed chainsaws at home. Then we convoyed to Nimboida. My car had hit a stump, and we had to tie the front bumper on with pull ties.

Over the next 3 months I had to evacuate 3 more times, as the fires came at Billies Creek from every direction.

Now to the nitty gritty of my submission:

Through the months of Sept to November we had unseasonably hot dry gale force winds from the northwest and sometimes the northeast.

It took some weeks and some blessed rain for the Bees Nest fire to shrink to one grey flame on sentinel hot spots, in the burnt out remains of the Guyfaulks Gorge.

That is when a fire chief, one who is totally unfamiliar with this country, who has section 44 at his disposal, decides that they are going to back-burn around the perimeter of the bees nest fire.

At a public meeting at Dundurrabin they informed the community of this. When questioned as to the insanity of this idea they said, "We don't know what else to do." My son suggested to them that to let a back burn get into Ellis State forest would be catastrophic, as it was full of massive piles of tree heads and 'waste', and had been so savaged by negligent logging practices that it was a giant's tinderbox.

The next day, in blistering hot North-westerly winds they dropped incendiary bombs in a 45 km line to the north and west of Billys Creek and Ellis state forest.

We saw it mapped that day. One bomb seem to have drifted off course into Ellis. Didn't make any difference. Of course it got into Ellis anyway.

Then I endured helicopters flying low over my house with their

futile little buckets of water. I counted the time. Every 2.5 minutes for hours on end for 4 days, twice.

The big machinery was sent out too. Huge dozers and sniggers to make fire breaks, which consisted often of smashing down rain forest rather than the more economic gums.

My neighbours witnessed these 'fire fighters' pouring deisel into dead wood they'd dozed up against the rain forest. It was really hard for them to get the rain forest to burn.

Whilst all this section 44 millions were being poured into extending the catastrophe, our local brigade was being run ragged trying to save property without enough resources or manpower.

My neighbours, my sons and daughter-in-law, the local firies (who could still stand), some helpers from Israel fought the fires for weeks on end. We put out a front of about 20 kms. WE fought it in the rainforest, day and night.

EVEN IN THESE EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS, WITH SECTION 44 GOING CRAZY LIGHTING UP, THE RAIN FOREST SAVED THE DAY. They slowed down the wind. They have a lack of undergrowth. We used backpacks, shovels, rakes, chainsaws, leaf-blowers, and passion for the forests. We took shifts watching for spot fires, for conflagrations. We bought a drone to save on the energy used running up and down through the wilderness night and day. We ran nearly all our water tanks dry filling pods and backpacks. We wore out boots and clothes and gloves and masks. We supplied ourselves with all this equipment.

ALL TO SAVE OURSELVES AND OUR ENVIRONMENT FROM THE MADNESS OF SOME SEEMINGLY POWER-MAD CHIEF, RUNNING WITH SECTION 44!

Commanding helicopters and heavy machinery from afar. Putting us all into what felt like a war zone, THEN LEAVING US ALONE to protect our properties and biodiversity which is unique on this planet.

They continue to destroy what even David Attenborough extols as priceless. No doubt nothing will change. State Forests will keep allowing/ encouraging wanton destruction of all the endangered species, which until last year found refuge in this environment.

They will continue to fill the Spring and summer air with the acrid incense of burning fledglings, koalas, gliders, reptiles, amphibians, softwood giants, wallabies, and all the sweet little guys who deserve life in their forests.

IT'S NOT RECOVERING IN ELLIS. It's become desolate. Too much damage.

WE SAVED SOME OF IT - FOR NOW.

IT IS TIME.

IT IS IS TIME TO START APPRECIATING NATURE.

IT IS THE WAY TO THE MIND OF THE CREATOR OF ANYTHING...

AND THE THE CREATIVE SPIRIT OF EVERYTHING.

The human race is is doomed if we keep going this way.

STOP THIS FROM HAPPENING.

Stop them from burning every year. Stop them from destroying rain forest. Replant with what has been lost, not with fire prone hardwoods.

1.1 Causes and contributing factors	drought and incompetence
1.2 Preparation and planning	On the run
1.3 Response to bushfires	unrealistic
1.4 Any other matters	lots of other matters

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