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To the Minister for Resources, Paul Harriss.

I am writing to you regarding the Public Community Forum held on the weekend at the Wynyard Wharf Hotel Theatre. Many local residents of Lapoinya and the wider community have been concerned by the impacts of the proposal by Forestry Tasmania to clearfell coupe FD053a, locally known as Broxhams Rd Forest.

This forest has been used by *over 3 generations* as a place for horse riding, bushwalking, bike riding and showing our visitors the beauty of the Tasmanian bush (Image 1). The coupe is literally 5 minutes walk from my house and borders the property of our neighbours. This is not an isolated forest out the back of town, this is the fabric of a vibrant, connected community and is an integral part of the people that live here.



*Image 1.* Broxhams Falls, 3 generations of Broxhams forest.

I grew up over looking this very paradise and along with more than 10-15 neighbourhood kids, we would venture into this forest for hours at a time. The creeks were our tracks, the man ferns our cubby house and the sassafras trees our lookout. The mud, a given. This freedom and stability allowed a sense of belonging and is an intrinsic part of who I am now. The time spent playing and horse riding in Broxhams bush allowed me to connect to nature and develop an understanding of ecological systems and respect for the land, on which we live. I further developed this understandings at university and I now work in Buhmland Regeneration and landscaping. I hope to continue a career in managing of our environment and the ways in which we interact with it. I'm not the only one who benefited by escaping to this peaceful place to recreate and explore. Other children of my generation grew into artists, world renowned musicians such as Elly Hoyt, nurses, lawyers, psychologists, mechanics, cafe owners, wildlife park operations managers, role models and well grounded people. The social benefits of this forest are tangible. I now see a new generation of kids growing up with his same connection to the land and they thrive off bushwalks to visit the waterfalls and see the animals. My niece is also developing an obsession with horses, as I was at her age and she already longs to master this skill so she too can take off on her pony down Broxhams Rd, a tradition in this area, we have all partaken in.

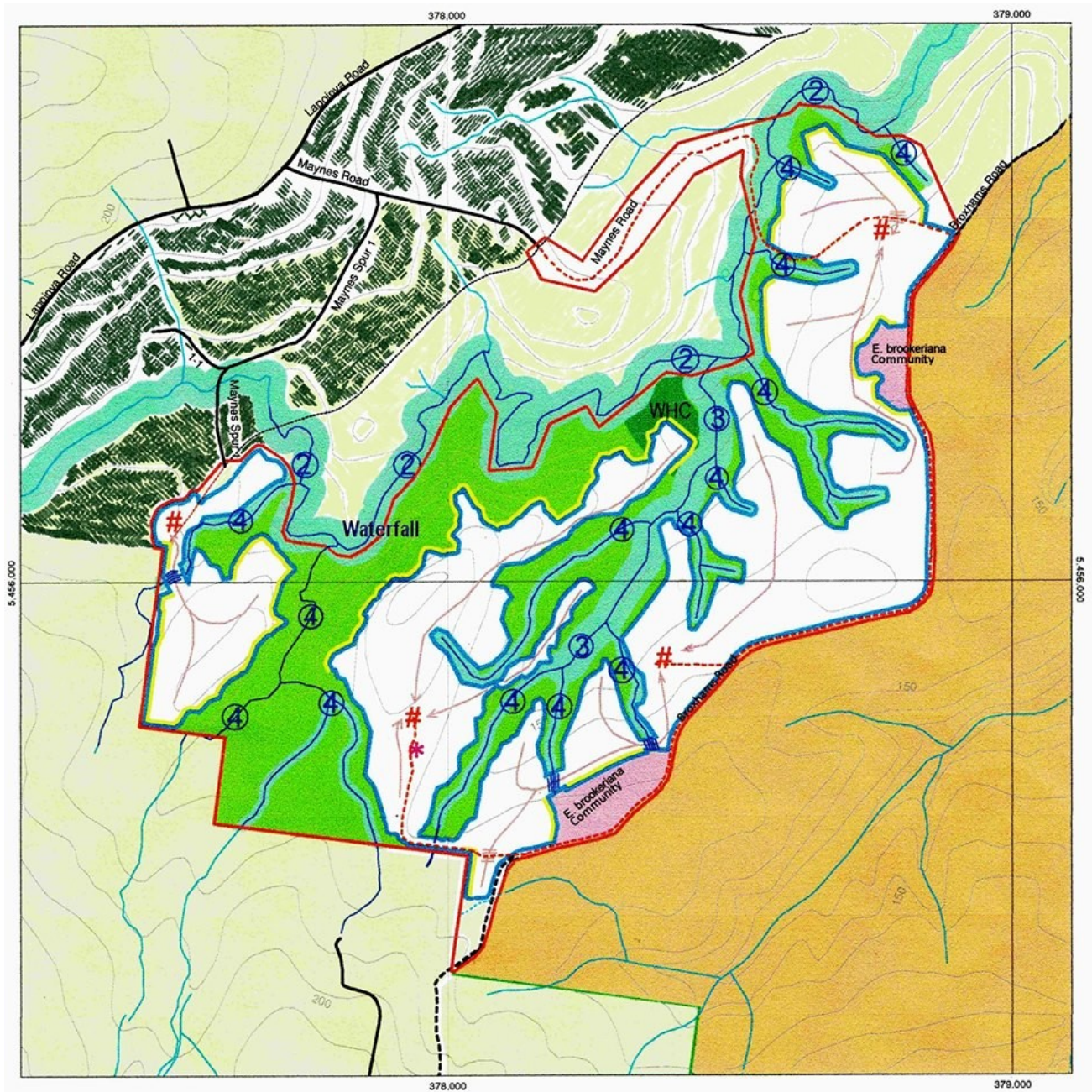
I attended this forum and spoke on these very experiences, growing up in Lapoinya and shared the important social and also the biological and economic values of this forest.

The diverse structure of vegetation in this forest supports rare, healthy and unique populations of flora and fauna (Giant Freshwater Lobster, Devil, Quoll, Bandicoot, Echidna, Wedge Tailed Eagle, Snakes, 34sp birds, and rare and threatened plant communities such as the Brookers Gum). We have conducted a number of our own fauna and flora surveys and have had independent field naturalists such as Nick Mooney and Richard Donaghey visit the area and report on their biodiversity findings. These findings all reiterate the functional values of this forest for habitat and biodiversity and also as refugia in an increasingly fragmented landscape.

Harvesting a coupe such as FD053a would severely reduce these important environmental values and the economic values of related ecosystem services such as water quality and filtration in the upper reaches of the Flowerdale catchment, imperative to the health of the bordering Flowerdale Reserve.

The economic future of harvesting vs retaining this forest has been well documented with economist John Lawrence providing accurate and clear cost benefit analyses (please refer to "Carbon accounting & FT profitability" article in the Tasmanian Times).

Over all the coupe area consists of a huge percentage of river catchment (>40%) and forms an important headwater supply into the Flowerdale River and key habitat for the Giant Freshwater Lobster (*Image 2*). Clear felling this area *will* impact on this healthy population of Lobsters due to increased sunlight, sediment load and changes in water flow and retention. The limited scientific data regarding populations of *Astacopsis* will not be sufficient for FT accurately assess the impacts of clear felling operations in this water catchment on the species. FT has made no effort to conduct population studies on this species despite this lack of data.



*Image 2.* Coupe map FD053a in Lapoinya, highlights the extensive river catchment area within the designated coupe area (extracted from Forestry Tasmania website, 3 year plan).

FLAG, the Forests of Lapoinya Action Group, ran this highly informative and professional event with a number of highly regarded and well studied speakers addressing the concerns of the community on these values. Just under 200 people attended. FLAG stands for my values as a scientist, local community member and as a young individual looking to the future of the North West coast as a region. Here's some of the comments other people have written after signing the Getup, Community run petition Requesting the House of Representatives in Tasmanian Parliament to 'abandon plans to clear fell coupe FD053a' (currently at over 600 signatures);

*“This beautiful habitat is a gift from the natural world for all sentient beings to share. I want it saved for future generations to cherish and enjoy.” Therese C.*

*“Because these native forest clearfells cost endangered species habitat, cost local community amenity and cost tax-payers through public subsidies: it's a lose-lose-lose situation.” Andrew P.*

*“An incredibly beautiful, ecologically diverse and sensitive part of Tassie that needs protecting from short term profiteering.” Grace W.*

I would like to ask you, as the Minister for Resources, Paul Harriss;

*>What is the reason that you or your delegates did not attend this well received community forum?*

*>Do you agree that before clear felling this coupe, Forestry Tasmania should be required to conduct a population study on the Giant Freshwater Lobster so any impacts of clear felling can be measured accurately?*

*>What are you going to do about the proposed clear felling of coupe FD053a?*

*>Will you aid us in removing this coupe from Forestry Tasmania's permanent forest production area?*

*>Would you be willing to attend a meeting with the local community representative body FLAG, to discuss this environmental, social and economic issue?*

I believe, collaboration between all stakeholders, regarding forest management in Lapoinya at this time, is required to ensure an outcome that meets the needs of the community, the environment and

industry. I ask you, in your role as Minister for the Environment to intervene and stop the proposed plan by Forestry Tasmania to clearfell coupe FD053a, so that an alternative solution that upholds these important social, environmental AND economic values can be met.

I respectfully request a reply to this letter and these questions as soon as is practicable.

Kind Regards,

Ms Duncan