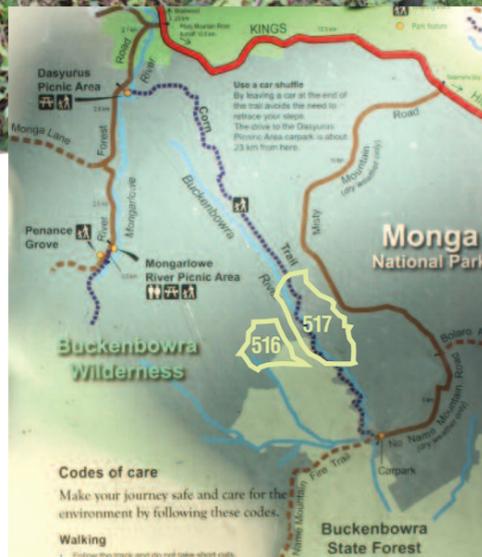




Corn Trail fail

Harry Laing is no stranger to forest action. Current logging right next to the Corn Trail has brought him and many others into the forest again. He explains why ...



where they've now gone back in. Adjacent to the bottom quarter of the Corn Trail, just up from the Buckenbowra river, there's just a 50m buffer, and they're now logging the hell out of compartment 517.

When you're down there and you look up at the escarpment, Clyde Mountain, Murrengenburg Mountain, with the river just down the way, you can't help but wonder what are they doing this for? The figures don't add up — they're making nothing.

We as taxpayers are paying them to log it — paying them to destroy it. Why? Who made that decision to log in there?

On the financial figures, our best estimate, and this is being generous, is they might make \$200,000 out of logging 290-odd hectares. That's so little money, it's unbelievable.

You know, Forestry Corp of NSW is a

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very odd entity. It's a corporation that is not bound by corporations law. It has two shareholders, the Finance Minister and the Treasurer— and it has a board. Essentially they're accountable to nobody. They're exempt from environmental protection laws, virtually entirely. Protest is completely banned and subject to draconian threats.

Here's the kicker. I read the other day, the softwood arm of Forestry Corp of New South Wales has been subsidising the hardwood arm, the native forest division, to the tune of \$79 million. They're cross-subsidising their own loss-making business. It must be for reasons of ideology — they think they'll keep cutting down native forest because they always have. Just because they're there — still in the forestry estate.

They admit that over 20% of this compartment is going for fire wood and 30% for pulp.

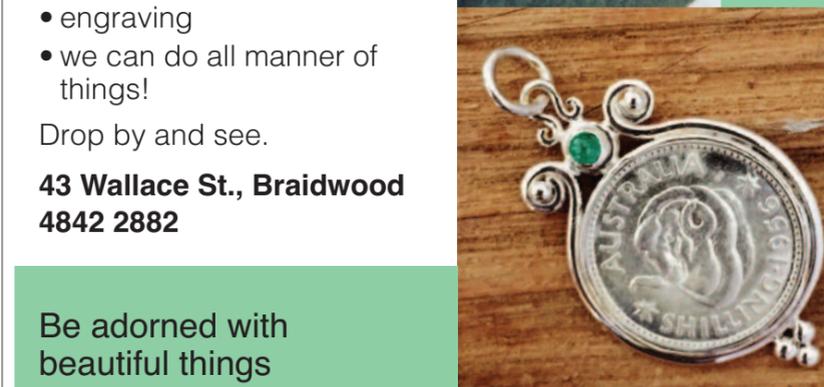
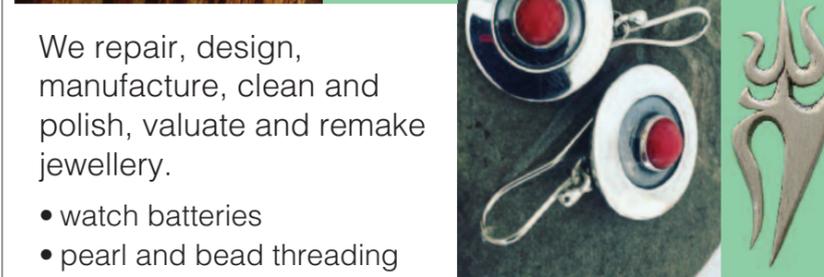
They are cutting down very large trees for firewood and pulp. Is that a high value industry?

We're calling for a moratorium on the logging. We want to see it transition into a forestry exclusion zone and then incorporate it in Monga National Park by which it's surrounded — it makes sense.

The Corn Trail is an iconic track. It's used by walkers and horse riders. It should be an integral part of the development of tourism for our region — things like guided walks and looking at our Indigenous history. That would make far more sense.

Then there's the fact that those trees, old growth forests and semi old growth, are very valuable as highly efficient carbon stores. Which has to be significant in this era of climate change.

You could do some simple sums and come to the conclusion that, even ignoring the value of tourism and public amenity, keeping the trees is worth considerably more than the \$200,000 you'll get from destroying them. ■



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