

Commonwealth of Australia  
STATUTORY DECLARATION  
Statutory Declarations Act 1959

1 Insert the name, address and occupation of person making the declaration

1. PETER JOHN ROBERTS OF LOT 1 DECKS 4  
COMBOYNE NSW, CONCRETE PRODUCT MANUFACTURER.  
make the following declaration under the Statutory Declarations Act 1959:

2 Set out matter declared to in numbered paragraphs

2 AS PER ATTACHED PAGES  
NUMBERED 1 AND 2

I understand that a person who intentionally makes a false statement in a statutory declaration is guilty of an offence under section 11 of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*, and I believe that the statements in this declaration are true in every particular.

3 Signature of person making the declaration

3 Peter Roberts.

4 Place  
5 Day  
6 Month and year

Declared at <sup>4</sup>COMBOYNE on <sup>5</sup>29<sup>TH</sup> of <sup>6</sup>JUNE 2015

Before me,

7 Signature of person before whom the declaration is made (see over)

7 Lyndel Cherie Swan

8 Full name, qualification and address of person before whom the declaration is made (in printed letters)

8 LYNDEL CHERIE SWAN

LYNDEL CHERIE SWAN  
Justice of the Peace Registration 193774  
in and for the State of New South Wales, Australia  
18 Hill Street  
Comboyne NSW 2429  
Telephone 02 4450 4158

Note 1 A person who intentionally makes a false statement in a statutory declaration is guilty of an offence, the punishment for which is imprisonment for a term of 4 years — see section 11 of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*.

Note 2 Chapter 2 of the *Criminal Code* applies to all offences against the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959* — see section 5A of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*.

# STATUTORY DECLARATION

*Peter John Roberts*

1. I attended a facilitated community consultation process at the Wauchope RSL Club on March 21, 2014. The meeting was a briefing by the Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW), NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), and Primary Industries-Fisheries NSW (DPI) on the NSW Government's plans re changes to forestry regulation across coastal NSW. The consultation was one of a series of meetings held from southern to northern NSW, including Sydney;
2. The changes are outlined in the Discussion Paper (February 2014) 'Remake of the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals';
3. I identified myself upon entering as a local landholder with timber resource and was seated at a table with senior representatives from FCNSW (including [redacted]; EPA ([redacted]); and [redacted] EPA); a [redacted] manager from hardwood millers, Boral Timber; and a [redacted] representative of logging and haulage contractors, Hoffmans Haulage Pty Ltd;
4. There were separate discussions at four different tables. I made the point at our table that I competed in car rallies, which are often run in State Forests. Over the last 10 years, I'd noticed that the condition of forestry roads had deteriorated badly. I said, 'There's no maintenance on your roads. I have been competing in rallies for over 30 years. Over the last 10 years - particularly the last five years - the roads have deteriorated dramatically, with very little maintenance'. Forestry said that they had no budget for roads other than in areas that were being harvested. I said, 'You've taken a lot of timber out over the last 10 years, haven't you been making money?' The Hoffmans contractor said they weren't making enough money, 'things are really tight'. I questioned the volume of timber coming out of the forest, especially in the last 10 or 15 years. 'Once, you selectively logged and thinned the forest in 15-20% of a compartment. Then you started on "group selection", doing quarter acre blocks. Now you're taking even larger areas, 10 hectares or so, and only leaving a few trees here and there. Why are you doing that?' At that point, the Boral rep jumped in and said, 'That's because we haven't got enough timber, it's all been locked up in National Parks'. I said 'I come from a rural background and if you've got say 300 acres that runs 100 head of cattle, if it's a dry year, you cut back to 80 head you don't run 150 head because you'll run short of feed coming into winter, or you could run short of water. I would have thought it would be the same with the forest. If you've got a certain volume of timber that you can harvest, you wouldn't take more, otherwise you're going to run out of timber'. [redacted] disputed there was more logging going on, 'No, that's not right. We're only taking as much as we did back in the eighties (1980s)'. I said, 'You'd have to be taking out a lot more because the amount of log trucks that have been operating in this area is a lot more than it used to be'. [redacted] seemed a bit rattled, and said 'Oh well, in 2011, we had a big year that year';
5. One of the FCNSW staff then said, 'The hardwood forests along the coast have been flogged to death, there's no decent sawlogs left, the timber's all gone'. I said 'I go into the forests around here all the time, and to me there's still some good timber left'. He said, 'No, no it's all stuffed, we've got to get rid of it, and put in plantation'. I knew he meant blackbutt or bluegum, not pine.
6. Even though no-one mentioned biomass burning, the penny dropped for me that these so-called 'stuffed' forests could be a big lot of resource, smaller regrowth timber which could be clearfelled and used to generate electricity. I realised how convenient and cost effective this would be, right

*Lyndel Cherie Swan*

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beside highways and the existing forestry road network with short travel distances and a lot of the infrastructure basically in place.

7. [REDACTED] agreed about the 'stuffed forests' and said, 'We need to go into the catchments because that's the only good timber left, there's nothing left in the lower country (on the coast)'.
8. The Hoffmans contractor then said 'We've got a few other little reserves'. I said, 'Have you got other plantations?' He said, 'Oh no, we've got another source'. I said, 'What you do mean?' He said 'Oh, we're going to get the National Parks (for thinning and logging)'.
9. There was a discussion of the proposed new rules for logging. It seemed to me that the main message was that, 'The old rules are out. We trust you to make the decisions'. The [REDACTED] EPA representative said 'You loggers are the ones with the experience and know how'. He said to the contractor, 'How would you feel if you're the one who makes the decision on whether to log, whether it's too steep, you make the judgement'. The contractor was hesitant and said: 'Oh yeh, so if there are breaches, I'm the one who's going to be held responsible'. I was as surprised as the contractor, because I'd always thought Forestry and the EPA weren't the best of mates. The EPA officer said 'No, no, no, no. I'll give you an example. Just say you decide to log on a slope that's steep and we had rain, there's run off, lots of erosion and the creek silts up. We would look at that and say, "That's not a breach because the reason it occurred, it was an unusual very heavy downpour over a short period of time. Under those circumstances that sort of erosion could have occurred on even a gentle slope"'. The contractor said, 'Oh, OK, that sounds all right. We can work with that'.
10. I can't recall now whether it was another EPA official or a Forestry officer who reinforced this point. He said, 'Because it's such a steep slope, the water would run off so quick, there'd be minimal erosion'. I said, 'Really? Even when you've taken out all the trees and disturbed and exposed the soil?' He just looked at me with a stupid grin on his face.
11. The EPA rep asked the contractor if there were any other issues that could improve harvesting efficiency. The contractor said, 'Yes, the other issue is we can't go through certain creeks and across some gullies without being in breach. So the time it takes us to find an alternative route, we waste a lot of time, which costs us money'. The EPA officer talked again about the experience of logging crews, 'We respect your knowledge of the forest to decide whether you can go through a creek or gully without causing any damage'. The contractor seemed happy. He said, 'Oh, that'd be all right'.
12. The meeting finished early afternoon. I got home and couldn't stop thinking about the surprising connections between the EPA and Forestry, and the watering down of the logging supervision. Thinking about that - combined with talk about clearfelling 'stuffed forests', going into catchments, the contractor saying that they were going to get timber out of the National Parks - it seemed like all these people were in it together.
13. I couldn't sleep and woke at 2am the next morning. I was still disturbed and upset. I wrote notes about what was said, so I could question other people about what was going on.

Declared at: *Peter Roberts*  
COMBOYNE NSW

Date: 29.6.2015

Before me (signature): *Lyndel Cherie Swan*

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