



STOP THE CHOP

Media Release

10/50 Code Tree Loppers are Coming to a Street Near You!

One of Australia's best-known humourists, journalist, TV presenter and author, Wendy Harmer, got the shock of her life when 6 iconic Norfolk Island Pines and 1 Cypress Pine were chainsawed on a property near her Collaroy home this week. When she enquired as to why this had happened, she was told it was legal for the resident to remove the trees under the conditions laid out in the 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Code. As Wendy said in her inimitable fashion on Facebook - "Bushfire protection? My arse!". "Living in suburban Collaroy, it was hard to see how any of these trees propose a bushfire risk". Later she said, "From what I understand this rule is being abused throughout the state by residents who want to achieve a better view and increase the value of their properties". "Is this in the spirit of what the RFS intended", she asked.

Gaye White, the convenor of STOP the CHOP, a community alliance formed to have the 10/50 Clearing Code repealed, said "We have received many complaints similar to this incident from Tweed in the North, in the Blue Mts and right down the Eastern coastline of NSW".

Results from the recent call for public submissions to the Rural Fire Service on the 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Code of Practice obtained under the Government Information (Public Access) Act show that 97% of the **3,579** respondents are against the Code.

Despite being modified twice since the legislation's hasty introduction in August 2014, NSW residents still have a raft of strong objections to the regulations in their current form. These include the fact that most trees are being cleared for reasons other than fire protection, that no independent assessments are being conducted on the tree removals, that the process lacks scientific support, and that the regulations are a "one size fits all" approach despite the huge diversity in fire risk.

Because of these and other concerns, the vast majority of submissions are calling for an immediate moratorium on the application of the Code, followed by a repeal of the legislation in its current form.

The LGNSW Local Government NSW (LGNSW), the peak body for NSW Local Government, representing all the 152 NSW general-purpose councils, the special-purpose county councils and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council amongst many others called for an

"Immediate suspension of Code 10/50".

"The overwhelming consensus is for a return to the original regime whereby local Councils made decisions on tree management in consultation with the RFS", said Gaye White "The review may take many more months and the only way to stop the daily misuse is to suspend the Code".



Wendy Harmer @wendy_harmer · 22h

Here's 10/50 preventing bushfire in the burbs of Nth Beaches.

Just a con job. Repeal the law!

@chopstoppers #nswpol



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Wendy Gai Harmer ► **STOP the CHOP**

The neighbours just took the chainsaw to half a dozen mature Norfolks in suburban Collaroy today. Bushfire threat? My arse. Many people don't like Norfolks, it's true that they are "ferals" but, just like the great willow tree debate from some years ago, their use for shade, bulwarks against erosion and greening a place in face of global warming are entirely underestimated. Repeal this stupid law that allows vandals free reign.

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