# Points for correspondence

**Gumbaynggirr Country**: The headwaters form part of Gumbaynggirr Country and are vital to their culture and cultural values. We must keep these forests in tact so as not to lose the important cultural values intrinsic to the Gumbaynggirr people.

**Biodiversity and habitat values**: The forests of the headwaters comprise critical habitat including Endangered Ecological Communities, Endangered Lowland rainforest and Old Growth trees. The biodiversity found in the headwaters include the IUCN Internationally listed Rufous Scrub-bird (the oldest songbird in the world), and species threatened to extinction including Koala, Yellow-bellied glider, Greater Glider, Sphagnum Frog, Stuttering Frog, Spotted-tail Quoll, Sooty Owl, Powerful Owl, and Glossy Black Cockatoo. The headwaters remain largely unburnt and are now critical refuges after the Black summer fires of 2019/2020.

**Soils**: The soils in the step landscape of the headwaters are highly fragile and subject to mass movement and landslips during high rainfall events. The soils become saturated and water enters the substrate destabilising the integrity of the soils resulting in irreversible mass movement and landslips. In 1992, logging activities in Oakes SF destabilised 88 000 tons of soil that slipped into the Bellinger River, causing severe water pollution, smothering the river bed and impacting the Bellinger River Snapping turtle.

**Carbon sinks and water security**: The forests provide excellent carbon sinks, taking in carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. They keep the forest floor cool and generate and sustain a moist cool environment. They retain large quantities of water that are released during periods of drought. Logging forests dries out the ground, leaving no water retention and relief during drought. These forests must remain intact to provide ongoing mitigation against a warming planet.

**Forestry Corporation economics**: The NSWFC is subsidised by tax payers on an annual basis. NSWFC operate at a loss and are targeting more old growth forests in remote areas to take what they can while they can. The statistics are out and continuing to log native forest is unsustainable, uneconomic and environmentally catastrophic.

**Tourism values**: The headwaters are at the foothills of the ancient Gondwana World Heritage Area. They provide critical wildlife corridors to the surrounding escarpment. The biodiversity and natural beauty of the entire ecosystem provide excellent tourism opportunities, to be protected and managed sustainably.

**Community resilience, health and wellbeing**: In regional NSW our lives are increasingly defined by the trauma of natural disasters including severe drought, fire, storms and flood events. The community’s resilience when facing these events is directly linked to the ability of our surrounding environment to withstand and recover and provide important buffers. Old growth and in-tact, un-fragmented native forests are critical environmental infrastructure necessary to cope during the climate crisis and extinction events we are now experiencing.

# List of Contacts

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These are (in order): the Deputy PMand the ministers for: Environment, Forestry, Climate Change, Resources, Health, Tourism, and Regional Development.

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## NSW GOVERNMENT

These are (in order) the Premier, Deputy Premier, and the ministers for: Environment, Agriculture and Forestry, Emergency and Resilience, Lands and water, Mental Health, and Tourism

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