

# KIBCA not happy with environmental assessment

BY TRIXIE CARTER

KOLOMBANGARA Island Biodiversity Conservation Association (KIBCA) is not happy with the environmental impact assessment carried out by Success Company in south Kolombangara.

This was stated by KIBCA coordinator Ferguson Vaghi in a statement.

Mr Vaghi said Success Company currently has a logging plan for south Kolombangara on Lots 1, 2, 9 and 10 above 400meters and the assessment is part of the plan.

He said the environmental assessment carried out

by the company was not enough and KIBCA sent a formal letter to the Ministry of Environment this month, stating its objection towards the logging plan.

"The information in the assessment was poor and the pages describing the impacts on biodiversity were missing.

"No field survey was done for the assessment," he said.

KIBCA called for a new detailed assessment and consultation.

He said most villages downstream of the logging were not told about the proposal.

However a spokesperson from Success Company confirmed yesterday that the environmental assessment KIBCA mentioned was not done by the company.

"The company has got nothing to do with the assessment carried out in south Kolombangara which an environmental group did, the assessment was authorised by the Ministry of Environment and Conservation," the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson said the company had never carried out environmental assessment in south Kolombangara and that an environmental group had done the assessment.

The statement further stated that KIBCA executives had met this week and voted to take a tough stance against logging above 400m altitude on Kolombangara Island, including taking High Court action against any new approvals.

The association remains firmly resolved to prevent logging above 400m altitude on Kolombangara.

The exceptional biodiversity of Kolombangara can be found above 400m and that should not be logged at anytime according to the association.

"This includes endemic species of birds and frogs found nowhere else on earth except in the high altitude

mountain forests of Kolombangara."

The area above 400m holds most of the Kolombangara people's cultural sites that are important to the constant supply of clean drinking water to coastal villages downstream.

The association sees it is as unsustainable logging practice to log above 400m.

KIBCA hoped to send letters to logging companies looking to exploit timber on Kolombangara above the 400m contour.

The association warned if logging companies were found disregarding the Solomon Islands environmental and forestry laws, they would stop them in court.