

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10.30 am Monday 13.11.23

WOOD CHIPS OR GREATER GLIDERS? ITS TIME TO END LOGGING IN NATIVE FORESTS.

13.11.2023

<https://theforestpledge.com.au/>

An estimated 50 million trees are bulldozed in Australia each year, leading to the deaths of over 70 million native animals as a result of deforestation across Australia.

These shocking statistics are why Dr Sophie Scamps, the independent member for Mackellar is leading a push to end industrial scale native forestry nationally.

Dr Scamps is today announcing her sponsorship of a pledge which calls on state and federal governments to work together toward a total national ban on harvesting native timbers from our precious forests.

The pledge already has the support of all federal Teal Independents and Senator David Pocock and key independent MPs in the NSW State parliament.

It's also backed by Geoff Gallop, the former premier of WA and several former Labor and Liberal environment ministers- including Robert Hill, former environment minister in the Howard government, Peter Garrett, former federal Labor environment minister, Bob Debus the former NSW environment minister, Rod Welford and Desley Boyle, two former Queensland environment ministers, and most Greens politicians in state and federal parliaments.

"It's now time for the serving politicians in the major parties to act," Dr Scamps said.

"Some of Australia's most iconic species – including koalas, gliders as well as countless other birds, mammals and reptiles - are found nowhere else in the world".

"Australia's native forests are their home and as recent events in Tallaganda State Forest show, logging can further threatens endangered wildlife like the Greater Glider, despite practices which supposedly protect these creatures," she said.

"If Australia continues to log our native forests at the current rate, these animals may become extinct in the wild during our lifetime", Dr Scamps said.

"How will I look my children in the eye when koalas have been wiped out in my home state NSW - which a NSW parliamentary inquiry found could occur as soon as 2050?" she said.

Dr Scamps has the support of her independent colleagues, Senator David Pocock, Monique Ryan, and NSW independent MP for Wakehurst, Michael Regan.

"Our native forests are vital to Australia's fight against climate change and species extinction. To keep our Paris commitments, we must not lose these vital carbon sinks; to keep our koalas, Leadbeater's possums and greater gliders, we must not lose these forest homes. These are two of the many reasons I'm signing the Forests Pledge," Dr Ryan said.

"Native forest logging is not ecologically or financially sustainable. Australia's unique biodiversity is under strain and we need leadership from the government," Senator Pocock said.

"There are ways to ensure workers can transition to the plantation industry, work as specialist firefighters or maintain forests for tourism while saving taxpayer money and saving threatened species," he said.

Mr Regan said logging of public native forests was destructive, unprofitable and a key threat to the future of the koala.

“I continue to call on the NSW government to follow Western Australia and Victoria by committing to ending logging of our public native forests,” he said.

Taxpayers, as the owners of these forests, are also wasting money. State forestry corporations report that native forest logging runs at a loss; most of their revenue comes from plantation operations, which are far more profitable.

“All scientific economic and social data show that native forest logging is environmentally economically and socially bankrupt. We have to make a rapid transition to a plantation-only industry,” Professor David Lindenmayer, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University said.

“Native forests are worth far more standing than cut down to make wood chips and paper pulp,” he said.

Dr Scamps acknowledged that stopping native forest logging involves a major economic shift in some regions, which are dependent on the timber industry.

“That’s why the pledge identifies the need for well thought through plans and commitments to transition workforces and communities to new industries like tourism.

“A decade ago, many people were sceptical about a pathway away from fossil fuels towards clean renewable energy. But the end of generating electricity from burning coal is in sight. In October South Australia averaged 87% of its electricity generation from renewables.”

“Similarly, it is possible to end native forest logging. Indeed, we must do so to arrest the extinction crisis.”

Dr Scamps said now is the time for politicians – state and federal – to commit to working towards this objective.

“I hope they will listen to the wise heads in their parties and the 30 scientists who have already signed the pledge,” she said.

“What it takes is vision and commitment, and that’s why I am sponsoring this call to action, to put momentum behind this cause.”

Politicians, corporations and civil society groups can sign the pledge here. [LINK](#)

Individuals can help by adding their voice: We ask them to write to their MP urging them to sign the pledge and work within their parties to support this goal.

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“What it takes is vision and commitment, and that’s why I am sponsoring this call to action, to put momentum behind this cause.”

For interviews with Dr Scamps: Anne Davies 0408223875

Media@sophiescamps.com.au

WHAT PLEDGE SIGNATORIES HAD TO SAY:

Robert Hill AC, former Federal Minister for the Environment (1996-2002).

“Too much of Australia’s rich and often unique biodiversity has been lost. What remains must be conserved and ending clearing and logging of Australia’s native forests would significantly help. Those who suffer loss as a result of such a decision should be supported. It’s time to say, enough is enough.

Bob Debus, Chair of Wilderness Australia, NSW Minister for the Environment 1999-2007

“The best thing we can do to protect our threatened wildlife and to take greenhouse gas out of the atmosphere is to quickly and fairly bring this failing industry to an end.”

Monique Ryan, Independent MP for Kooyong

“Our native forests are vital to Australia’s fight against climate change and species extinction. To keep our Paris commitments, we must not lose these vital carbon sinks; to keep our koalas, Leadbeater’s possums and greater gliders, we must not lose these forest homes. These are two of the many reasons I’m signing the Forests Pledge.”

ACT Independent Senator, David Pocock

“The Albanese Government can’t deliver on its commitment of no new species extinctions if they allow native forest logging to continue.

I’m taking the Forests Pledge on behalf of my community and urging the government to put an end to native forest logging with a package for workers still employed in the industry.

Native forest logging is not ecologically or financially sustainable. Australia’s unique biodiversity is under strain and we need leadership from the government.

There are ways to ensure workers can transition to the plantation industry, work as specialist firefighters, or maintain forests for tourism while saving taxpayer money and saving threatened species.”

Dr Stuart Blanch, senior manager, Towards Two Billion Trees, WWF-Australia

“Australians are fed up with having to fight for forests to remain standing as our climate warms and iconic species like koalas, greater gliders and swift parrots slide towards extinction. Logging biodiverse and carbon-rich eucalypt forests to make low-value woodchips or tomato stakes can no longer be justified. A transition from industrial logging to forest conservation and a plantation-based timber sector is necessary and long overdue.”

Michael Regan, NSW Independent MP Wakehurst

“Logging of public native forests is destructive, unprofitable and a key threat to the future of our treasured national icon, the koala.

As a member of the NSW Legislative Assembly, protecting koalas and their forest homes is an important policy priority for me. I welcome the NSW Government’s historic commitment to the Great Koala National Park and look forward to seeing it established as a matter of urgency.

I continue to call on the NSW government to follow Western Australia and Victoria by committing to ending logging of our public native forests. NSW must transition to a sustainable plantation-based sector that supports jobs in regional NSW and ensures the timber products we all rely on in construction and other sectors of our economy can be produced sustainably.”

Jacqui Mumford, chief executive officer, Nature Conservation Council, NSW

“Ruling out native forest logging is a critical step for nature protection in Australia. It is driving so many of our iconic wildlife and bird life to extinction. Australia is a global deforestation hotspot and allowing the industry to continue is morally and economically irresponsible.”

David Cross, Chief Executive Officer, Blueprint institute

“The economics of native forest logging no longer stack up. The taxpayer should not be subsidising environmental degradation to indulge protectionist fantasies. There is a way forward for the industry, with more focus needed on expanding plantation forests, but there has to be a willingness to take it.”

Australia Institute, Vanessa Bleyer, Lawyer

“Tasmania is ripe for a future facing plantation-based timber industry. New plantation processing technology would allow us to have the look and strength of native forests in our kitchens and keep native forests standing for biodiversity and habitat. It’s a win for industry and the environment — we just need the investment.”

Doctors for the Environment, Kate Wylie, Executive Director

“Forests filter our air, provide fresh water, regulate our climate and improve our wellbeing. They are critical in climate change mitigation and are vital for protecting Australia's unique biodiversity. We must stop logging our native forests and protect them for all the benefits they provide and because they are beautiful.”

FACT SHEET

Our obligations

Just over 2 years ago, Australia, along with more than 100 other countries, signed an agreement called the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use at COP26 to end deforestation by 2030.

Despite this, logging continues at a significant rate with tens of thousands of hectares damaged each year fuelling Australia's animal extinction and climate crisis. Over 1,400 Olympic sized swimming pools of timber is taken in Australia every year.

It's no surprise Australia has the worst mammal extinction rate of any country in the world and is the only developed nation on the deforestation hotspot list.

The state of play

Logging was banned in South Australia in the 1870s and in the ACT in the 1980s.

In May the Victorian government announced it was ending native forest harvesting by 1 January 2024. It had already protected 96,000 hectares of state forests from logging in 2019.

[Ending native timber harvesting \(deeca.vic.gov.au\)](https://deeca.vic.gov.au)

This follows Western Australia's decision in 2021 to cease native forest logging from the start of 2024. [Historic end to native logging a step closer | Western Australian Government \(www.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.wa.gov.au)

Logging will cease across in South East Queensland region by 31 December 2024, and in the Eastern Hardwoods Region by 31 December 2026. [Native Forest Transition \(www.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.wa.gov.au)

There are no commitments to end logging of public native forests in NSW, Tasmania and Central and Western Queensland.

Wood supply contracts covering most native forest logging in NSW and Tasmania are due to lapse in 2027 or 2028.

The economics of logging

The Blueprint Institute, an independent think tank, has recently published a paper on the economic impacts of ending native forest logging and alternative land use and industries for logging regions.

[Branching Out: Exploring Alternate Land Use Options for the Native Forests of NSW - Blueprint Institute](https://www.blueprintinstitute.org.au)

The Australia Institute has published a paper on Tasmanian native forest logging, the impact on employment and alternative industries.

<https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/ending-native-forest-logging-without-market-mechanisms/>

[The opportunity for Australia's native forests - The Australia Institute](https://www.australiainstitute.org.au)

What the scientists say

Native forest logging destroys or damages habitat of wildlife including threatened species. Logging is mentioned as a driver of habitat loss in official conservation advices or recovery plans for a range of threatened species, such as east coast koalas.


Logging of mature and old growth trees can remove hollows that provide dens for wildlife during the breeding season.

Logging can increase the severity of bushfires. Research data shows industrial logging opens up the canopy of eucalypt forests, allowing more sunlight and wind to penetrate to the forest floor. This dries out fallen leaves and branches. It also stimulates growth of branches on trees and of shrubs, creating 'ladders' for low intensity fire to climb into the canopy.

Logging on sloping land can cause soil to wash into creeks when it rains. This pollutes rivers and wetlands which impacts aquatic ecosystems and downstream water users.

Logging can increase carbon emissions as trees are felled and leftover branches burnt. Protection of large old trees secures forest carbon stocks.

[Forest Pledge Website \(theforestpledge.com.au\)](http://theforestpledge.com.au)



The Forests Pledge

We stand before the Australian community with a heartfelt plea to urgently end industrial logging of native forests across Australia.

Half of Australia's forests have been lost.

Australia can become a world leader in protecting and restoring forests to protect wildlife, store carbon and adapt to climate change. Ending native forest logging would also help us meet our climate and nature commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Global Biodiversity Framework.

With generous support for timber workers and a well-managed transition, we could grow regional economies with a sustainable timber industry and support tourism businesses.

Taxpayer subsidies to government logging agencies must end. Major investment is needed to expand sustainable plantations to secure future supply of timber.

We must listen to and learn from First Nations Australians, whose deep knowledge is critical to successfully restoring and protecting our native forests.

We – the undersigned – pledge to do everything in our power to pressure local, state and federal governments to end the destructive and loss-making logging of our precious native forests.

WHO HAS SIGNED?



Sophie Scamps
Member for Mackellar



Sarah Hanson-Young
Senator for SA



Jordan Steele-John
Senator for WA



Penny Allman-Payne
Senator for QLD



Nick McKim
Senator for Tasmania



Zali Steggall
Member for Warringah



Adam Bandt
Member for Melbourne



David Pocock
Senator for ACT



Lidia Thorpe
Former Senator for VIC



Kate Chaney
Member for Curtin



Barbara Pocock
Senator for SA



Kylea Tink
Member for North Sydney



Dorinda Cox
Senator for WA



Janet Rice
Senator for VIC



Elizabeth Watson-Brown
Member for Ryan



Zoe Daniel
Member for Goldstein



Monique Ryan
Member for Kooyong



Larissa Waters
Senator for QLD



Mehreen Faruqi
Senator for NSW



David Shoebridge
Senator for NSW



Peter Whish-Wilson
Senator for TAS



The Hon. Peter Garrett AM
Former Federal
Environment Minister



Allegra Spender
Member for Wentworth



Andrew Wilkie
Member for Clark

WHO HAS SIGNED?



Michael Berkman
Member for Maiwar



Judy Hannan
Member for Wollondilly



Michael Regan
Member for Wakehurst



Abigail Boyd
NSW Legislative Council



Emma Hurst
NSW Legislative Council



Kobi Shetty
Member for Balmain



Jeremy Buckingham
NSW Legislative Council



Jenny Leong
Member for Newtown



Tamara Smith
Member for Ballina



Dr Amanda Cohn
NSW Legislative Council



Amy MacMahon
Member for South Brisbane



Larissa Waters
Senator for QLD



Cate Faehrmann
NSW Legislative Council



Nick McKim
Senator for Tasmania



Rosalie Woodruff
Member for Franklin



Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney



Brad Pettitt
WA Legislative Council



The Hon. Robert Hill AC
Former Federal Environment
Minister



Sue Higginson
NSW Legislative Council



Greg Piper
Member for Lake Macquarie



The Hon. Rod Welford
Former Queensland
Environment Minister



The Hon. Desley Boyle
Former Queensland
Environment Minister



The Hon. Bob Debus AM
Former NSW Environment
Minister



**The Hon. Dr Geoff Gallop
AC**
Former Premier of Western
Australia

WHO HAS SIGNED?

	Australian Conservation Foundation		Environment Centre NT		North East Forest Alliance
	Australian Forests & Climate Alliance		Environment Victoria		NSW Nature Conservation Council
	Biodiversity Council		Friends of the Forest Mogo		QLD Conservation Council
	Blueprint Institute		Friends of Leadbeater's Possum		Rainforest Information Centre
	Brooman State Forest Conservation Group		Greenpeace		South East Region Conservation Alliance
	Canberra Forest Alliance		Humane Society Internationale		The Australia Institute
	Coastwatchers Association		ifaw		Victorian Forest Alliance

WHO HAS SIGNED?



Conservation Council
ACT Region



Knitting Nannas for
Native Forests South
Coast



Conservation
Council SA



National Parks
Association
NSW



Doctors for the
Environment



National Parks
Association
QLD



Environment East
Gippsland



National Parks
Association
Victoria



Environment
Tasmania



North Coast
Environment
Council NSW



WWF



South East Forest
Rescue



WA Forest
Alliance



Wilderness
Society