**WA conservation groups boycott biased forestry process**

12th April 2018

The WA Forest Alliance (WAFA) won’t participate in a process run by the Forest Products Commission (FPC) to prepare a Forestry Industry Development Plan for WA.

The plan is supposed to set out the future of the forestry industry in WA and be developed through an independent process involving all stakeholders.

The process has failed from the outset and does not conform to the ALP Government’s election policy, so WAFA is boycotting it.

The government agency responsible for the sale of logs from State forests and plantations, the FPC, is running the whole show. It is seeking to gain some social licence for ongoing and increased native forest logging and has set up a review panel to develop a plan for the future of the timber industry.

It claims the five-member review panel is independent. However, it put the chair of the FPC and the CEO of the company that buys karri logs for woodchipping on the panel.

The process purports to have the involvement of environmental groups. In fact, environmental groups have been expressly excluded. We were not offered a seat on the review panel or invited to the November 2017 two-day scenario planning meeting or any other planning sessions.

The process has been running since last August. WAFA’s first involvement didn’t occur until April 2018.

Labor’s 2017 Platform commits the government to a process that involves all relevant stakeholders, including conservation groups, *“to reach agreement about the management of forests at a regional landscape level, with a focus on transitioning to a more environmentally and economically sustainable approach to meeting our timber demands.”*

We have no confidence that the FPC-led process is capable of developing a strategic plan that will reflect the McGowan government’s platform or pre-election commitments on forests, or that it will be acceptable to the majority of the community.

WAFA has already prepared a plan for the future of the forestry industry in WA.

Its Forests For Life Plan for the development of the plantation and farm forestry sector and protection of the native forests has been enthusiastically received and attracted widespread support. It was endorsed by Labor in the lead-up to the 2017 State election at its launches in Perth and the South West but has been ignored by the FPC in its native forest logging-centred process.

We are seeking the initiation of an independent industry development planning process, in line with Labor’s 2017 Platform, that is open, inclusive, rigorous and consensus-oriented. Such a review must be set up separately from the FPC and involve, from its inception,

* Noongar custodians;
* WAFA and other peak environment groups;
* Forest-based businesses and representative groups including honey producers and tourism and recreation operators;
* Independent scientists including those with ecology, biodiversity and climate backgrounds; and
* Small plantation and farm forestry growers.

We support a rapid and equitable transition of remaining logging out of native forests and the enhanced development of a vibrant, sustainable and jobs-rich wood products industry based on farm forestry and plantations. Excellent opportunities exist for the development of the timber industry on a sustainable base and for the improved management of native forests.