



# AFCA

Australian Forests & Climate Alliance Inc.

Spring  
2018



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# Member Update **ALERT:**



Pressure must be placed on Labor to rewrite its forest policy to 'no further renewals of Regional Forest Agreements and repeal of those renewed'. The evidence to support loss of social licence for native forest logging is growing, (p.2). Though (some) COALition MPs privately express forest 'sympathy', the *log at all costs* policy to accommodate corporate interest makes a COALition turn around difficult.

AFCA members at regional and state level have clearly demonstrated communities **favour Ending NF Logging**. At a national level the AFCA executive works to grow an

alliance to demonstrate to media and politicians the scale of the scientific evidence, and thus community opposition against any further destruction of Australian native forests and woodlands.

Recently we have approached selected minor parties on forest/climate issues hoping to elevate the status of forests/climate as a critical election issue by encouraging all these parties to endorse AFCA's end NF logging policy. Reception so far **positive**.



## It's time to 'turn up the heat' on this aspect of campaigning

Labor voices commitment to native forest protection but acts to the contrary, evinced by recent VIC and WA state governments in office. Labor promises of 'scientific review' prior to RFA renewals is weak, *another* 'review'. But Labor stalwarts such as retired NSW Environment Minister Bob Debus and former WA Premier Dr Carmen Lawrence are coming out in support of protecting native forest now. [Watch Bob Debus in Lorne Forest, NSW](#) denouncing the NSW Labor government's 1998 RFA mistake .

## Evidence most oppose native forest logging

National timber industry data from a 2016 survey of over 11,500 rural and regional Australians responding to questions about acceptability of forestry related activities showed: 65% of rural/regional and 70% of urban residents found it unacceptable; only 17% of rural and 10% of urban residents found it acceptable. 11% of rural/regional and 9% of urban residents found it neither acceptable or unacceptable; 8% and 11% were, respectively, unsure.

**Re NSW RFA Renewal and regulatory changes:** Of the 5,425 submissions on RFA reviews/renewals only 23 supported renewal. Of 3,148 submissions re the NSW RFA regulatory system only 13% supported the industry.

**Mechanical Fuel Load Reduction (MFLR) update:** a U.S. concept the logging industry is promoting in Australia involving 'thinning' (logging) canopies to increase space between tree (crowns) for fire control, with or without subsequent burning.

**Background:** Logging Industry champion Ross Hampton introducing the concept in 2015: <http://ausfpa.com.au/news/bushfire-re-think/> Further details, including filmed industry operative explaining the real purpose of trials (stand thinning), discussion of the role MFLR plays in the Forest Industry Advisory Council's (FIAC's) 'Nil Tenure' agenda are in AFCA's Spring 2017 newsletter.

**Significance:** MFLR is a tool the logging industry might use to justify intervention in the management of ANY forested lands – including national parks and privately owned forests. Combined with another FIAC recommendation, that all forested lands, including those in private ownership, be certified for how well they are delivering 'ecosystem' services, MFLR could advance the concerted effort of the timber industry via the National Party, to secure access to or at least influence management of the remaining forested lands across this continent, certainly those in public ownership. The Nationals and FIAC advocate the timber industry as the appropriate manager for forested lands, regardless of tenure.

Below is a bare bones update of the of the \$1.5 million

dollar 2017 'trials' conducted in NSW, Victoria and WA. If 'successful' these trials are likely to see FIAC secure \$300 million over 10 years for logging and/or burning forests as a 'bushfire mitigation measure for forest and community protection'.

**The Trials:** The burning component of the trials was held delayed throughout 2017 due to climatic factors.

A year later all aspects are complete:

- operational (the logging and the burning)
- economic and environmental cost/benefit
- social attitudes studies

Operational components are

- a) mechanical fuel load reduction ((MFLR) logging only
- b) MFLR logging followed by post log burning

A critical aspect of the trials was comparing plots that are only logged with those that are also burnt.

Information on the results to date provided by MFLR project officer, a former timber industry executive, is that time and motion costing and social attitude studies, though complete aren't yet published.

He commented on the irony of the burning part of the trials being delayed for a year owing to climatic factors and that trials have thus far indicated the virtue of mechanical fuel load reduction (logging) as a means of fire prevention. On being asked if this would be the likely conclusion of the trials he replied 'in some areas you **if you don't remove material created by the thinning you could increase fuel load**'.

**How interesting.** So, if, under some MFLR regimes, logging to reduce fire risk **increases** fuel load why would you countenance MFLR if the aim is to **reduce** fuel load?

When the final report is published it will be interesting to see if FIAC still recommends \$300 million from taxpayers to log and/or burn forests.

MFLR Project Officer John Samuel is on 0447445601



## National Logging Industry Update

The launch of the [National Forest Industry Plan 2018](#) exemplifies the stranglehold the timber industry exerts on Australian governments. This is routinely demonstrated at Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) 'gala' dinners where Prime and/or Forestry Ministers endorsing the industry's 'wish lists'.

[Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull attended the dinner in 2017 'despite pressing national security issues' to announce his government's determination to support and facilitate the development of this new industry 'plan'.](#)

2018 Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, [Senator Richard Colbeck, champion of the Timber Industry/National Party agenda for 'tenure neutral' forest management, attended the 2018 AFPA dinner at the National Press Club](#) to launch the plan.

It mentions mechanisms by which access to native forests 'across tenure' can be secured. This intent was foreshadowed in the 2016 Forest Industry Advisory Council's (FIAC's) document [Transforming the Australia's Forest Products Industry](#). AFCA Spring 2017 newsletter explained how the logging industry now writes national forest policy: Positioning industry executives within the federal forest portfolio as the legitimate 'advisory' body, (FIAC), to co-chair the body writing Australia's future forest policy being the first step. That same body also recommends the amount of republic expenditure to be provided to its members forest management 'initiatives' promoting the logging.



Hence taxpayers are funding:

- \*MFLR - logging forests in the guise of bushfire control*
- \*inventories to quantify potential wood volumes from a range of forested lands regardless of status/tenure*
- \* promotion to themselves of 'multi-purpose' certification schemes some of which could assess, according to a timber industry standard, whether they are managing their own forests to provide maximum 'ecosystem service' (via logging)*

**Below parts of the 2018 plan dealing with access:**

p.7 - 'large tracts of forested lands are held in private or Indigenous ownership or management across Australia.

P.9 The Australian Government will support the development of Regional Forestry Hubs that undertake an inventory of 'resources on private land to determine their potential to supply wood for the processing sectors' and work with state governments, private native forest owners and Indigenous communities to 'unlock potential timber supply'.

**Left:** National Forest Industries Plan 'A Billion Trees for Jobs and Growth' expands plantations but also intends massive expansion of access into private and indigenous owned/managed native forests and the national forest reserve network, promotion of 'certification' to ensure logged product is easily marketed and manipulation of native forest landscapes to pseudo plantations via thinning under the guise of bushfire control **Right:** illegally converted native forests in NSW, experiments with clear felling and species manipulation via intensive logging, undertaken by state forests. With the introduction of MFLR this 'native forest' could have only one tree per 6 metres standing. Thus native forests become factories.



## Western Australia

The Western Australian Forest Alliance (WAFA) held a science forum on 12<sup>th</sup> October in anticipation of the draft mid-term performance review of the Forest Management Plan 2014-2023.

The WA RFA renewal 'consulting' phase (a ludicrous description for a non-transparent almost dictatorial process whereby scientific, economic and community expertise is ignored regardless of the content or number of submissions opposing renewal).

**WAFA will hold its AGM in Barrabup Forest Saturday 24th November 11:30am - 2:30pm** Logging is planned to start up again in Barrabup over the summer. An approx 3500 strong petition was finalised recently by the parliamentary committee.

Thanks to the extraordinary work of the Barrabup Conservation Group, a portion of the forest has been added to the newly mapped old-growth areas and won't be logged, and the old-growth that was cleared in roading has to be 'rehabilitated'. Barrabup thus received a prolonged reprieve and is now very well known but FPC has told the locals that logging will occur over the summer.



[This powerful new 1 minute video, filmed in Lewin forest near Manjimup early 2018, exposes what is happening behind the strip of roadside vegetation in the world's only karri forests.](#)



**WA biomass:** Always looming on the horizon. A biomass plant in Manjimup has approval to use only plantation residue but is situated on the chipmill site and every road in the karri forest leads to the chipmill. There is huge pressure to thin the regrowth karri in full knowledge that this will produce mainly low grade logs (perfect for biomass).

In the lead-up to the last state election, now Premier McGowan promised to hand out \$30 million to support the building of a new biomass energy plant in Collie but little has been heard since.

The Forest Products Commission is trying to establish a massive Integrated Timber Processing Yard that would take up to 180 000 m<sup>3</sup> of jarrah, karri and marri logs a year. Expressions of interest have been received by the Forest Products Commission and forest biomass energy might be included in any of these.

[Meanwhile watch WAFA team members put in a bid on behalf of the people of WA for the 150,000 cu metres of karri and jarrah, \\$ 15,000,000 worth of carbon storage from forests if left standing](#)

## NSW Regional Forest Agreement renewals and not longer protection of rainforest, HCV

Renewal of the NSW RFA spells tragedy for wildlife, catchments, soil, [the myriad pollinators necessary for the continuation of the native vegetation, upon which also depends reliable pollination for agricultural crops](#), continues the degradation of the forest carbon sink and further jeopardizes regional rainfall precipitation. This RFA renewal proceeds with disaster for nature in its wake, as did Tasmania's.

Twin tragedies face NSW as they did Tasmania with regulatory weakening coinciding with RFA renewal. Tasmania saw areas to be opened up for logging that were previously out of bounds. NSW's RFA renewal accompanies approval of a virtual dismantling of the NSW RFA logging regulatory system. The regulatory system a set of 'rules' - supposed to imply compliance? Not difficult to enforce when (most of) the rules have been thrown out and those retained or, supposedly strengthened, aren't that relevant in the few areas they apply.

**The process:** The O'Farrell government's 2014 cynical 'Remake' of the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (IFOA's) which stipulated the EPA compose new rules but with no reduction in timber supply morphed and expanded into a more comprehensive deregulatory process. The Native Forestry Bill 2017 (NFB) 'de-regulates' logging on public land via a Re-make of the Coastal IFOAs (the RFA system) and further 'de-regulates' logging on private land via a Private Native Forestry Code (PNF).

Enshrined still in the recently endorsed new IFOA is the paralyzing mechanism by which only Ministers for Forestry or the Environment Protection Agency can act against illegality or unsustainable practice, the former against itself, the latter against a fellow government department—highly unlikely. So 3rd party rights to take the government to court in the event of logging 'rule breaking' are again explicitly ruled out for NSW citizens.

The NFB renames regulations rules and incorporates rhetoric about adherence to the NSW existing Protection of the Environment Operations Act and Biodiversity Conservation Act as strengthening compliance and investigative powers. However compliance with ecologically sustainable forest management won't occur because:

- the regulatory authority (the EPA) has advised it doesn't intend to issue penalty notices
- there are almost no rules to break
- the timber supply volumes exceed what native forests can sustainably provide

For example, in 2009 the Auditor General warned there wasn't enough wood: 'North Coast Forests are being cut faster than they can grow back', yet **the new TSA not only ignores this but allows for an increase in volume from 190,000 to 237,000 m3. How is an increase in volume physically possible? Easy, decrease harvest rotation times; remove formerly protected areas from protection to get access to more wood.**

\$45 million in NSW for lower reaches of rivers but nothing but destruction of the catchments in upper reaches. Mapping for northern NSW rivers shows 75% of streams are in SF catchment areas are less than 20ha. The buffers against logging here are being reduced, 22,000 kilometres of catchment streams affected.

Logging rotation times have changed under RFAs from a norm of 60 to 40 to 20 to 10, some places 5 years !



Eupomatia laurina (Bolwarra, Native Guava, Copper Laurel) needs its Ellescchodes weevil to be pollinated. We must not lose our interdependent plant animal ecosystems in our rainforests and moist eucalypt systems. Photo: Dr Geoff Williams

## The Coastal Integrated Forestry Operation Approval 2018 will:

- Increase logging intensity throughout public native forests, including legalising high-intensity clearfell logging in 140,000 ha of forests between Taree and Grafton, enabling clear-felling of areas up to 45ha in one go. This will convert biologically complex, natural forests into monocultures and destroy 43% of the mapped high-quality koala habitat on state forests.
- Open previously protected old-growth forest to logging by 'remapping and rezoning' these high-conservation-value areas.
- Remove the requirement to look for threatened species including koalas before logging
- Implement utterly inadequate tree retention rates practically guaranteeing koalas will die in logging operations and hastening their slide towards extinction
- Allow the logging of giant trees up to 160cm diameter (five metres circumference) so the big trees made available from reduced stream buffers and rezoned old growth can be exploited.



Regent Skipper needs its host tree Veiny Wilkiea; no rainforest, no skipper



Without enough tree hollows you we won't be here any longer

Due to Commonwealth concerns about threatened species and the impact of the loss of hollow bearing trees the new IFOA boasts an increase in retention of hollow-bearing trees from 5 per ha to 8 per ha *but this is not meaningful in the coastal forests to which it applies because owing to the devastation wrought by former IFOA regulations there aren't that many left anyway. Damaged habitat trees can be replaced with trees that lack hollows.* Where one mature tree had to be retained as a future habitat tree *there is now no such requirement to provide for a likely replacement hollow-bearing tree* for one that will eventually die out. Also, *the former (regularly flouted requirement) to remove debris from around habitat trees to prevent their annihilation in a post log burn, has been further weakened.*

*Still there might be retention of 5 nectar trees per hectare, but only within 2km of a record of Swift Parrot or Regent Honeyeater which given limited records will have little effect.*

The NSW government is (madly) spending \$45 million on marine parks with money for lower reaches of rivers while legalising logging that destroys catchments from the highest reaches. In northern NSW 75% of streams are in state forest catchment areas of less than 20 ha. Under the new *relaxed regulatory system* existing buffers around streams will be reduced. *Most of our vital headwater streams will have already inadequate 10 metre buffers reduced to 5 metres.* Dailan Pugh of the North East Forest Alliance has calculated **stream bank buffer reduction will affect 22, 000 kilometres of upper catchment streams.**

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/significantly-compromised-government-ignored-advice-of-its-own-officers-on-logging-20181118-p50grm.html>

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/logging-deals-are-death-warrants-for-native-animals-20181121-p50hhh.html>

Meanwhile the people of NSW continue to fight for their forests. New groups are springing up all the time and those that have been fighting the battle a long time are not giving up. See next page about the Corunna group.

and please for the north of the state <https://chuffed.org/project/help-us-promote-the-great-koala-national-park>

## Corunna Campaign NSW



A new South Coast campaign has been earning respect for its strategic energy and persistence. Corunna Forest campaigners successfully held off logging of Compartment 3058 for almost 6 months, with logging due to start in April and finally beginning on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

The campaign, which attracted strong community support was to protect a spotted gum forest which was home to threatened species including Masked Owls, White Bellied Sea Eagles and Southern Brown Bandicoot. The nationally listed critically endangered Swift Parrot was also using the forest for shelter and feeding during its winter migration.

Corunna is the most southerly spotted gum native forest in NSW in a State Forest still available for logging. It borders on the Corunna coastal lakes. It was one of the very rare State Forests in the region where logging was not dominated by woodchipping.

Ultimately, campaigners succeeded in extracting concessions from the Forestry Corporation based on the threatened wildlife and the adjacent lakes.

Progress of the campaign and the logging received scrutiny in news media, State Parliament and social media and had the Forestry Corporation constantly on the back foot, defending its actions.

Although the logging did eventually go ahead, it could have been a lot worse. Best of all, some new, energetic and creative campaigners have joined the ranks of those working for an end to native forest logging on the South Coast.





# Victoria

The [FSC audit report of Vicforests](#) operations dated early December 2017, was finally released in early October 2018. For the fourth time ... they failed. Various Victorian groups provided very detailed evidence against VicForests and toured the audit team to devastated sites.



Figure 1-local group reps from EEG and GECO show the auditors what was an old growth forest.

There are a number of areas of non-compliance but a major fail was their clearfelling and burning of forests, especially threatened wildlife habitat and old growth. VicForests claims it will work to gain FSC in the next 2 years. We can't see them improving much beyond their spin, but it seems it will buy them another 2 years to continue selling their blood-stained timber through Bunnings and to remain as a member of FSC Australia. Environment East Gippsland has lodged a formal complaint against their membership but little is being done despite it being an apparent breach of membership guidelines.

## The legal cases

The two legal cases mentioned last newsletter are continuing with one to be heard in early December and the other early in 2019. The first concerns the [overlogging of a valuable forest type](#) which the law states must see 60% protected. DELWP is claiming it was a 'drafting error'. The other case concerns the [validity of the RFA in the Central Highlands](#). This could be an important case for many reasons.

## VicForests 'scientific glider logging'

An absurd and possibly illegal new system of [logging listed threatened wildlife](#) habitat was invented by VicForests in July-August. VicForests' spin doctors claim they "*want to learn how to create optimal conditions for Greater Gliders after logging.*" Previous research clearly shows they DIE after having their habitat logged. There is serious concern that VicForests did not obtain permits to experiment on threatened wildlife or gain Animal Ethics approval. Local groups continue to follow this up.



## Nippon's Reflex paper mill plans a \$600M waste incinerator

Nippon's Maryvale pulpmill (makers of Reflex copy paper) has been leaching the life out of the Central Highlands ash forests for over 80 years under a very lucrative legislated agreement. Nippon is now proposing to [incinerate Melbourne's growing garbage](#) which is an appealing plan to a city with growing garbage problem. With a \$7.5M grant to produce a feasibility study it claims the \$600M plant will create no significant pollution or health impacts! The Latrobe Valley's air is already a cocktail of toxic pollutants. Nippon claims the gas bill of \$8M a year is economically crippling. We will assume the \$600M would not be from their pockets. If it was, it could easily buy them another 75 years of gas fired power. If this investment is locked in and a state government given a cheap solution to its rubbish problem, it would require the mill to continue logging forests for years to come.

This battle has only just begun!

Waste incinerators are not efficient. To make the same amount of energy as a coal power plant, they release 28 times as much dioxin as coal, 2.5 times as much carbon dioxide, twice as much carbon monoxide, 3 times as much nitrogen oxides and 6 – 14 times as much mercury and 6 times as much lead and 70% more sulphur dioxides.

Not good for forests, climate or people's health.

## Massive rainforest breach sparks review

After the horrendous and blatant [destruction of a rainforest area by VicForests](#) in March 2016, the logging compliance officers of DELWP dithered and stalled for almost 2 years.



Figure 2 VicForests yet again obliterates a pure stand of rainforest, this time near Cann River

When it finally reached the court in August 2018 the case was thrown out due to botched paperwork prepared by DELWP. DELWP could not correct and resubmit because they had stalled long enough to see the statute of limitations apply and the [time period had elapsed for charging them](#) for illegal logging. This allowed VicForests to escape prosecution over a serious criminal act. All concerned including the government looked extremely dodgy – and just two months out from the November state election. The Environment Minister called for a rapid [review of the compliance section](#) to assess enforcement and why those charged with enforcing the law can't do their job. The report was due on October 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Victorian State elections – Nov 24<sup>th</sup>



The Andrews government has been described as the worst Labor government ever for not declaring any new National Parks.

Important forests and rare wildlife have also been shown no mercy. The previous promise of declaring the Great Forest National Park in the tall wet forests NE of Melbourne has been abandoned.

Daniel Andrews has favoured logging interests and the CFMEU to the extent of buying a failed mill in Heyfield in order to keep workers employed.

In Melbourne's inner city marginal seats a very dedicated group of people from various groups have been using constant and sustained pressure in these areas to inform voters of the plight of our forests; from banner drops over freeway bridges to early morning train station leafleting to projections onto city buildings and lobbying.

### [New Great Forest National Park Film—Please watch and share](#)



**LABOR** - the Great Forest National Park concept apparently shelved, along with common sense, wildlife, catchment protection, urgent climate impact mitigation potential, long term real jobs.

**POST ELECTION POSTSCRIPT:** Though not final, election results indicate Greens could lose some seats, more due to preference deals done between micro-parties. It's likely several micro-parties will gain seats. Approaches to elected cross-bench members might have to be made.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-11-21/victorian-forests-appear-to-have-been-logged-illegally/10496424>

<https://www.wilderness.org.au/news-events/keeping-a-watch-on-the-forests>

## Tasmania

### INFAMOUS SARAWAK LOGGERS UNWELCOME IN TASMANIA

#### Fears of escalating forest destruction and secret deals

A proposed timber mill at Bell Bay in Tasmania's north spells another Malaysian logging giant setting up to plunder the island's unique native forests. A Western Australian company, Patriarch and Sons, has been established by one of Malaysia's most disreputable logging companies, Shin Yang. Shin Yang have been responsible for wholesale destruction of intact rainforests, illegal logging, aggressive palm oil expansion and human rights violations, all documented by international environment and social justice organisations.



“This company is not welcome in Tasmania and their application to build this timber plant and woodchip mill should be refused,” Environmentalists Jenny Weber and Peg Putt said today.

“We are shocked that Tasmania's unique forests are going to be flattened to feed another atrocious Malaysian logging company. This is the second Sarawak logging giant that has been ushered in to destroy Tasmania's unique native forests, rainforests and wildlife habitat, after Ta Ann has been paid more than \$40 million of taxpayers money to entrench forest destruction in Tasmania for the past 12 years,” Bob Brown Foundation's Campaign Manager, Jenny Weber said.

“We believe that this proposed investment must be examined by the Foreign Investment Review Board to ascertain whether this company is fit and proper to invest in Australia, given their long history of association with illegal logging, human rights abuses and likely corruption,” Peg Putt said.

“We call on Premier Hodgman to confirm or deny the involvement of Tasmania's Coordinator General in this matter. What arrangements and undertakings have been given to this company? Has Tasmania's Coordinator General been involved with this company coming here, with the usual behind the scenes dealings?” Peg Putt said.

Ms Putt is the former leader of the Tasmanian Greens and was also their Forests spokesperson, from and is also former CEO of Markets For Change who worked on Sarawak issues from 2012.

“Given the appalling corruption revealed after the change of government in Malaysia, what due diligence was done by Australian regulatory authorities regarding the source of the investment dollars behind this company? Instead of welcoming this company into Tasmania, Senator Colbeck and the Forest Industries of Tasmania (FIAT) should have been questioning this company's obscene accumulation of wealth at the expense of local people in Malaysia,” Jenny Weber said.

“We are calling on the Tasmanian and Australian Governments to rule out any subsidies for this multi-million-dollar company that has gained its wealth from the wholesale destruction of Sarawak's forests and indigenous peoples' livelihoods and now intends to destroy Tasmania's unique environment,” Jenny Weber said.

**Tasmania** - Photograph by Tania Wilby

The blockade in the Tarkine forest continues after two months. Visitors driving the Tarkine Tourist Drive pass by the ominous logging road that leads to the ancient forests proposed for logging.

Stalwart forest guardian Tania Wilby reported from the camp:

"We had around 14 interstate visitors from Vic, Adelaide and NSW call in over 4 days to see what was going on and also show support.



Every visitor has been blown away by the size of the trees and the beauty of the Sumac forest, and the waste that this industry leave behind on the ground. A pair of eagles flew over camp and brought much excitement, and a white goshawk was spotted in the trees. White flowers everywhere. This ancient myrtle tree is in our view from the camp. I love how the moss is like a soft pillow and has made its way to the top of this giant tree. Being at camp is so rewarding and everytime I visit the forest and stand under the canopy I realise it is up to us to save this forest these trees cannot save themselves they need our help."

To join Sumac camp or help contact Bob Brown Foundation Campaign Manager, [jenny@bobbrown.org.au](mailto:jenny@bobbrown.org.au)

**Bob Brown Foundation BioBlitz** On the first day of the 2018 BioBlitz scientists found a healthy devil, discovered a new species of orchid and explored the rainforests and waterways of Takayna/Tarkine. It costs Bob Brown Foundation \$300 day to support the scientists in the field. Please see BB Facebook for how to donate if you are in a position to do so.



### **The biggest petition on an environmental issue in Australia's history**

Tuesday November 27, the BB Foundations is celebrating presentation of a record-breaking petition for the protection of takayna / Tarkine.

With the support of its campaign partner, outdoor clothing brand Patagonia, they are holding a rally on the lawns of Parliament House to present a petition of 250,000 signatures to the Tasmanian Parliament.

See BB FB for how to help these events.

## Australian Capital Territory

After several years of work on the issue, Conservation Council ACT and member groups achieved some protection of mature native trees in 2018.

<https://conservationcouncil.org.au/loss-of-mature-native-trees-recognised-as-threatening-process/>

The loss of mature native trees is now recognised as a key threatening process under the [Nature Conservation Act 2014](#).

Conservation Council ACT held an [Environment Exchange on mature native trees](#) in February 2017 and prepared [public information on saving mature native trees](#). A [submission to the Scientific Committee](#) was made on behalf of Conservation Council ACT Region; Friends of Grasslands; Australian Native Plant Society Canberra Region; Canberra Ornithologists Group; and Field Naturalists Association of Canberra.

The Scientific Committee considered the submission and sought further advice from the Conservation Council, CSIRO scientists, a range of academics, and appraised various other reports and sources.



As a result the Scientific Committee has: *“agreed to broaden the threatening process from the loss of hollow bearing trees to the key threatening process of Loss of mature native trees (including hollow bearing trees) and a lack of recruitment”*. The [instrument containing the advice](#) took effect 27 September 2018. This will not save all mature native trees but it does recognise that removing them is a problem – a key threatening process no less! An action plan will be drawn up to outline measures to reduce their removal.



As the advice says: *“The priority management objective is to reduce the loss of mature native trees and its impact on threatened native species and to improve recruitment of native woodland tree species across the ACT.”*

Conservation Issues and Proposed Management Actions include protection such as restricting clearing of mature eucalypts and mature native trees that contain nest hollows and *“retention of non-mature native trees across urban and rural landscapes to ensure a future supply of mature trees and avoid lag times”*.

The advice also suggests actions to conserve and manage trees across the landscape and for further monitoring and research including on Eucalypt dieback in the ACT and *“appropriate provenance for revegetation programs under climate change”*.

*Thanks to Larry O’Loughlin, retiring Director of the Conservation Council ACT for providing this information.*

## RFA UPDATES AT A GLANCE

**National:** Despite an attempt to highlight the danger of RFA renewals via the Federal Greens [Regional Forest Agreements \(Legislation\) Repeal Bill](#) (introduced on Threatened Species Day September 7th, 2017) the Federal and state governments follow a renewal agenda.

**Tasmania:** The RFA was renewed, August 2017, along with extensions of old growth and rainforest available for logging via a special clause in the RFA about access to 'Specialty Timbers'.

**New South Wales:** The announcement of the renewal of NSW RFAs is imminent with Timber Supply deals already done and an almost complete dismantling of the former—already inadequate RFA regulatory system. NSW activists aware of the fine print refer to it as the new 'no rules' logging. The supposedly 'independent' NSW Natural Resources Commission has acceded to government 'instructions' and agreed that it will be necessary to log rainforest and old growth to supply the augmented timber supply agreements. This is despite the NSW Auditor General warning in 2009 that in the north 'forests are being cut faster than they can grow back' while in the south clear fell areas have been historically larger than those in the north. Now regrowth forests in northern NSW have undergone a re-zoning. The disastrous and illegal 'heavy single tree selection' that has decimated coastal and some hinterland forests will continue. And a new zone is being introduced; the new intensive zone will clear fell over 150,000 ha of native forest between Grafton and Taree, regardless of threatened species on the brink of extinction including Koalas, and waning wildlife populations due to the shocking desecration of these same forests over the last 15 years.

**Western Australia** has moved into its RFA renewal 'consulting' phase (a ludicrous description for a non-transparent almost dictatorial process whereby scientific, economic and community expertise is ignored regardless of the content or number of submissions opposing renewal).

**Victoria:** We might wait until the election is over to see if Victoria will get the miracle

GOOD LUCK !!



**NSW regulatory change for renewing RFA sees vast areas rezoned for CLEAR FELL**

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### ALERT

#### TENURE NEUTRAL VIA CERTIFICATION

TO SEE IF YOUR FOREST IS STILL STANDING AND NOT DELIVERING ITS ECOSYSTEM SERVICES ADEQUATELY?

**'Currently, we know more about the production forest estate than we do about the forest area outside production. Certification of all forested areas would provide an opportunity to better understand the conservation estate and help inform a whole of landscape approach that would include water quality and catchment, biodiversity, invasive pests, weed and disease risk, and the potential effects of future climate and fire regimes. It would ensure equitable treatment of forests in a tenure blind manner, and measurement and monitoring of management objectives for all forests'.**

*Commonwealth of Australia 2016, Transforming Australia's forest products industry: recommendations from the Forest Industry Advisory Council, Forest Industry Advisory Council, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, p.20*

## International Carbon Accounting

The dire necessity to restrain global warming to 1.5 C above current levels requires cessation of fossil fuel emissions and reduction of emissions from the land use sector due to deforestation (the complete annihilation of forests and/or permanent conversion to another use) and forest degradation (typically industrial logging).



The [2018 IPCC report](#) shows Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) has to occur with emission reduction. B.E.C.C.S i.e. Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage was modelled *but not recommended*. Restoration of terrestrial (and other) carbon sinks to optimum capacity with human intervention is the best scenario.

The report *'Missing Pathways to 1.5°C: The role of the land sector in ambitious climate action'* also makes it clear that a solution is not a forest bio-energy/fuel pathway but restoration of forests to their natural state. Extract below.

Large-scale bioenergy use as a climate mitigation strategy—whether through biofuels as a substitute for fossil-fuels, solid biomass burned for heating and electricity, and most recently, the expectation that BECCS will remove carbon from the atmosphere—is ubiquitous throughout modelled scenarios for 2°C and 1.5 °C. While there are numerous technological, economic and biophysical constraints to increasing bioenergy use, which are highlighted elsewhere (*Fern, 2018*), here we address the issue of the carbon neutrality of burning biomass, and the question of a sustainable supply of biomass for energy in the context of an ecosystem and rights-based approach.

Modelled 2 °C pathways assume a level of bioenergy production by 2050 that would require doubling the current harvest of all global biomass for all uses (food, feed and fibre) (*Dooley et al., 2018; Searchinger et al., 2015*). Field and Mach (*2017, p.707*) highlight the issues at stake, suggesting that converting land on the scale required for bioenergy in many modelled climate change mitigation scenarios would “pit climate change responses against food security and biodiversity protection”. Such a massive intervention would have immense social, economic and ecological impacts, including diverting land

from food production and driving up food prices (*Boysen et al., 2017*).

Bioenergy is seen as a mitigation strategy because of its assumed carbon neutrality. This is based on the theory that when bioenergy is combusted, CO<sub>2</sub> is released, but this is recaptured when the biomass stock grows back, or, that if ‘residues’ are burned they would decompose and emit CO<sub>2</sub> if not burned for energy. Yet the combustion of biomass for power generation or heating “will generally release more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere per unit of delivered electricity or heat than fossil fuels, owing to biomass having lower energy density and conversion efficiency CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per unit of energy produced” (*Courvoisier et al., 2018, p.21*). There is a clear scientific consensus that using forest products for bioenergy (woodpellets or wood chips), through harvesting live forest biomass is not carbon neutral (*DeCicco and Schlesinger, 2018; Searchinger et al., 2017; Smyth et al., 2014; Sterman et al., 2018*).

Increased atmospheric concentrations from burning bioenergy may worsen irreversible impacts of climate change before forests eventually grow back to compensate (*Booth, 2018; Courvoisier et al., 2017*;

*Schlesinger, 2018*). Schlesinger states that “cutting trees for fuel is antithetical to the important role that forests play as a sink for CO<sub>2</sub> that might otherwise accumulate in the atmosphere” (*Schlesinger, 2018, p.1328*). Ultimately, increased forest harvest for bioenergy decreases the forest carbon sink, which is the opposite of good climate mitigation policy. Even net emissions from forestry residues burned as fuel are significant over the mid-term (20-40 years), a time-scale relevant to current climate mitigation efforts (*Booth, 2018*).

The use of annual or short rotation crops for bioenergy is also considered to be carbon neutral due to the annual nature of regrowth, which avoids the long pay-back periods of forest harvest. Many countries have mandates that require biofuels to be blended into fuel for cars and trucks, either at a specific volume or percentage level. For example, the US Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) calls for blending 15 billion gallons of conventional ethanol, typically corn ethanol, into the US fuel system. However, stakeholders including green groups, farmers’ and indigenous peoples’ organisations, and development agencies have joined researchers in refuting the climate claims made about biofuels. Full life cycle assessments have shown that biofuels can have higher

emissions than the fossil fuels they are meant to replace (*Searchinger et al., 2015, 2017*).

Most land is part of the terrestrial carbon sink or is used for food production, meaning that harvesting for bioenergy will either deplete the existing carbon stock, or displace food production leading to indirect land use emissions (*Searchinger et al., 2015, 2017*). Given high demands on land for food production and other uses, climate policy should not support bioenergy from energy crops and other dedicated uses of land, such as wood harvest for bioenergy. The supply of wastes and residues as a bioenergy source is always inherently limited and the collection and use of wastes and agricultural residues present logistical and cost barriers, although the use of secondary residues (cascade utilisation) may decrease logistical costs and trade-offs associated with waste use (*Smith et al. 2014*).

In conclusion, this brief overview of current debates around bioenergy use suggests that sourcing bioenergy from forest harvest is not carbon neutral; any bioenergy from the ‘dedicated use of land’ is unlikely to be carbon neutral and comes with a significant land opportunity cost; and the use of residues and wastes for bioenergy is limited.



## 'Don't Mention The Emergency'

Some great work is being done by climate action groups re forests and draw down and the danger of forest biomass based B.E.C.C.S scenarios. Some extracts from 'Don't Mention the Emergency' by DarebinCAN.

*'The emissions reduction pledges made as part of the Paris agreement bear no relationship to the 1.5C or 2C temperature limits countries signed up to – nor to the 1C limit that would be safer. Even if honoured, the Paris emissions pledges condemn us to a world 3C to 5C hotter with catastrophic outcomes.127 Emergency action is required for any real chance of staying under 2C warming, let alone 1.5C or 1C.128*

### What goes up must come down

There has been little public discussion of drawdown, and there are a number of reasons this might be an awkward topic. The Paris agreement relies heavily on being able to successfully suck the carbon emissions back from the atmosphere in the longer term, using measures such as biomass energy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS).

This reliance is not directly mentioned and BECCS is unlikely to work at the scale required. According to deputy director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, Kevin Anderson: **"It is pantomime season and the world has just gambled its future on the appearance in a puff of smoke of a carbon-sucking fairy godmother."**

Former NASA chief scientist James Hansen estimates that: **"If phase down of fossil fuel emissions begins soon, improved agricultural and forestry practices - including reforestation and steps to improve soil fertility and increase its carbon content- may provide much of the necessary carbon dioxide extraction."** Natural carbon drawdown methods, including restoration of forests and wetlands, regenerative farming, and marine permaculture, are all win-win solutions and talking about these can help raise support for negative emissions. The sooner we reach zero emissions, the smaller the drawdown task will be and the less we will need to rely on expensive measures like direct air capture of carbon dioxide or problematic measures like BECCS.



### Restoring forests and wetlands

We are in a race against time when it comes to preserving and regenerating forests, wetlands and other ecosystems. If we take the strongest possible action to reduce emissions, and move fast, the natural world can make a significant contribution to the tasks of drawing down the carbon dioxide we must remove from the atmosphere. If we move slowly, we will see global warming destroying these habitats faster than we can restore them.

**"Reforestation and afforestation could improve the quality of the planet through the conservation of biodiversity and an improvement in water quality and water resources, and all of this while we are reducing the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. It's a win-win-win possibility"** according to Alessandro Baccini, a lead author of a 2017 study on tropical forests.

Coastal wetlands and mangrove forests are very rich carbon stores. Coastal wetlands can store five times as much carbon as tropical forests over the long-term while providing nurseries for fish, feeding grounds for migratory birds and a first line of defence against storm surges.

[Download booklet 'Don't Mention The Emergency'](#)

## Forest Certification: in the news lately

### Responsible Wood' revision of Australian Forestry Standard

First 'Responsible Wood' announced in October its 5 yearly review of the Australian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management, AS 4708, Sustainable Forest Management – Economic, social, environmental and cultural criteria and requirements. The review will be undertaken in conjunction with Standards New Zealand to develop a joint Australian/New Zealand Standard for both countries.

**Who or What is Responsible Wood?** Responsible Wood is the Australian Forest Standard (AFS), i.e those that advocate and support it. [AFS became Responsible Wood in 2017 and it's a re-branding exercise.](#) Its website states that Responsible Wood is an accredited standard development organisation and has responsibility for developing and maintaining AFS AS 4708 Sustainable Forest Management.

### What is the Australian Forest Standard (AFS) and where did it come from?

By the 1990s the international timber industry was initiating alternative "industry friendly" forest certification schemes in response to international movements to provide consumers with information about where the wood that they were consuming was coming from, i.e. sustainably managed forests, or not. An Australian steering committee of government and forest industry representatives formed initiated and sponsored the development of an "Australian Forest Standard".

The AFS was developed within the frameworks of the Montreal Process and ISO14001 (Standards Australia 2007). Supposedly the standard provides credibility to claims of sustainability whereby *Independent, third-party certification against the Australian Forestry Standard provides a clear and unambiguous statement that wood production in a particular defined forest area was managed in accordance with a set of predetermined and clearly defined environmental, economic, social and cultural performance requirements that support sustainable management of forests.* (Standards Australia 2007, p 2)

**The standard was published in 2002.** It is recognised by government and the timber industry as a point of authority in validating claims on wood products. **Is it any good?** The best way of appraising the standard is to consider that all of Australia's government business enterprises charged with the management of state forests have been awarded certification under the AFS. (There are some other private forests and plantations also certified by AFS). As part of the AFS review Responsible Wood is inviting interested organisations to nominate candidates for the AS/NZS 4708 Standards Reference Committee and Working Groups. There is a non government organisation category.



## Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Australian Standard announced November 13, 2018

**What is FSC?** FSC is an organisation initiated by non government environment groups seeking to create international consensus on ways of certifying the sustainability of the sources of wood. Over the years those involved developed a set of principles and criteria against which to measure 'sustainability' of source. A set of International Generic Indicators of sustainable forest management were developed and these are a default standard for countries which do not develop their own standard according to FSC principles and criteria. The Australian FSC standard has been developed over the last 5 years.

**How does FSC operate?** Internationally and at national levels 'chambers' reflecting arenas of impact from logging forests, plantation and native 'agree' on FSC criteria and international and national standards. These chambers are supposed to represent industry, community stakeholders and environment.

AFCA has consistently stated it considers any attempt to certify industrial logging of native forests as sustainable a foolhardy and indeed dangerous exercise, given the degradation and loss of extant native forest ecosystems, nationally and globally. Many members of the Australian 'environmental chamber' of FSC agree native forest logging should end but 'hang in there' because FSC has (some) more stringent criteria than AFS. With Australian and state governments endorsing native forest logging via RFAs and the state forest agencies implementing RFAs claiming sustainability on grounds of AFS certification, forest activists see it as perhaps the one means of compelling state forest agencies to either lift their game or lose customers because of failure to achieve FSC certification.



*An area of forest in Romania logged by an FSC certified company. In Romania this company logged illegally, in some national parks and other reserved areas. An FSC expert panel suggested FSC disassociate from the company but FSC opted instead for suspension. Though FSC did break ties with this company apparently FSC is now working on a 'roadmap' to bring the company back into FSC certification. In general what FSC does when one of its members 'fails the test' is a vexed question. Or can an organisation that repeatedly fails to gain FSC accreditation just keep trying and publish that it's on its way to certification?*

FSC is criticised for 'greenwashing' the logging of intact forest landscapes (IFL). Below are appraisals of the usefulness/uselessness of logging certification in general,

<https://e360.yale.edu/search/?q=greenwashed+timber+how+sustainable+forest+certification+has+failed>

<http://www.ethicalcorp.com/deadline-2020-we-wont-end-deforestation-through-certification-schemes-brands-admit>

and of FSC in particular

<https://news.mongabay.com/2018/03/greenpeace-international-ends-its-forest-stewardship-council-membership/>

<https://forestsnews.cifor.org/58693/tougher-fsc-certification-guidelines-would-make-forest-oversight-more-transparent-in-brazil?fnl=en>

## Who is promoting certification of native forest logging as ecologically sustainable and why?

Certainly the Australian government, reinstating as Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Senator Richard Colbeck, long term champion of the timber industry agenda to increase access to any forests in Australia, regardless of whether they be in national parks, privately owned land or indigenous managed areas. Re forest certification he stated in November 11, 2018

[“Global demand for timber products is projected to quadruple by 2050 and the new Australian FSC Standard will help us tap into this growth market....Australia now has national standards aligned to the two global certification systems, PEFC and FSC .The Australian Government contributed \\$900,000 to the development of both the new FSC standard and the Responsible Wood standard’](#)



As per the alert on p. 14 this certification is not restricted to plantation wood. The industry wants all our forests certified so that ‘product’ can be sold under a ‘sustainably sourced’ logo including if exported for bio-energy/fuel.

**Senator Colbeck’s 2015 views that ‘Logging in National Parks good for vulnerable species’ haven’t changed.**

*‘Timber NSW says controlled logging should be allowed in the state’s national parks and Crown lands as well as in state forests. That view is supported by Senator Richard Colbeck, Parliamentary Secretary to Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce. Sara Phillips ABC News, Friday 17th August, 2015’*

**But in the absence of certification what is there – another free for all?**

This massive issue needs to be dealt with objectively and in public. Informing the public is critical. For example the Green Building Council (GBCA) purports to be able to recommend to builders and consumers what wood is sustainably sourced. After a 2017 request from Friends of the Earth, (FoE), Victoria, GBCA met with forest activists in early 2018. 27 environment groups across Australia co-signed a statement of concern that GBCA endorsed the Australian Forestry Standard and awarding green star points to buildings using AFS certified timber sourced from environmentally destructive native forest logging operations. FoE Victoria were calling on GBCA to reinstate former Timber Credit policy that only awarded green star points to buildings made with recycled and/or Forest Stewardship Council certified timber. GBCS said they were reviewing their gold star ratings and the timber credit would also be reviewed as part of that, but that it would take 5 years and in the meantime they would continue to award green star ratings to buildings with timber that only has AFS certification.

**The hackneyed excuse used for this backtrack was, as it so often is by those wanting to sell wood from industrial logging of Australia’s now rare native forests was, 'If we don't use Australian timber we will have to import Orangutan habitat" Tough that logging Australian native forests is destroying Koala habitat.**

**[https://www.melbournefoe.org.au/green\\_building\\_council\\_stil\\_not\\_so\\_green](https://www.melbournefoe.org.au/green_building_council_stil_not_so_green)**

**Summary:** There is no one agreed international standard. For certification of native forest logging. There is competition between certification schemes and their prominence, use or validity fluctuates depending on the money flow. As wood sellers pay certifying auditors and can choose to support any certification scheme there is no guarantee that claims of sustainability are genuine. Consumers, overloaded with competing sustainability claims, try to pick products at least marginally more environmental than ones without it. In a sea of green ticks and logos they are reduced to picking the one that looks the greenest or the most cute and friendly. It’s a guessing game.

A less ambiguous, less confusing path would be for a united environment movement to say no to the certification of any native forest logging—particularly industrial logging—and go in hard against any standard that does it.

# End Native Forest Logging by 2020 Parliament House Rally Dec 3rd hosted by Corunna Forest Group



#2020LogOffNativeForest

Our image of a STUFFED PARROT is the LAST you will ever see of a Swift Parrot if Australian governments continue to log Native Forests - the majority of which is sent overseas as wood chips for as little as \$4.60 per tonne. The Forest Embassy and the Lone Drummer request your presence at Parliament House, Canberra, where a plea will be made to end Native Forest Logging by 2020. The Swift Parrot, the Masked Owl and many other species are being pushed beyond the brink. This is an extinction crisis. And for what?

Although the NSW State Government is solely responsible for the operations of Forest Corp NSW, the Federal Government has ultimate responsibility to the international community for the extinction crisis.

We call on our government to:

- close the Eden chip mill,
- end the appalling loss of habitat for the migratory swift parrot and other species which WILL become extinct if logging continues,
- implement the Great Southern Forest proposal,
- protect what remains of koala habitat
- respect Native Title issues
- repeal inadequate forestry legislation such as the IFOAs,
- debunking the untruths promoted by State Governments.

We will be meeting at the Public Assemblies green area. Please make appointments with politicians to discuss this urgent issue before and after the event.

Getting There:

Meet on the lawns in front of new Parliament House, Federation Mall - Park underneath Parliament House if there is room (paid parking)

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Visit\\_Parliament/Plan\\_your\\_Visit#gettinghere](https://www.aph.gov.au/Visit_Parliament/Plan_your_Visit#gettinghere)

Petition

[Protect the Masked Owl and the baby Sea Eagles of Corunna Forest](#)

Starts on: Monday, 3 December 2018 at 11:59 AM Ends on: Monday, 3 December 2018 at 1:00 PM

Parliament Drive Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT, 2600  
Australia

**An AFCA representative will read this prepared statement at the rally**