



# Australians for Animals

PROTECT • NURTURE • RESTORE

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## THE FUTURE OF OUR NATIVE FORESTS AND WILDLIFE IS ON THE LINE

**Unfortunately, the news continues to be very discouraging. A recent judgement from the Federal Court rejected any legal options to give any protection to our rapidly disappearing forest wildlife.**

For two years the forest conservation community has waited for the outcome of a legal challenge by the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) based on the Federal government's failure to consider and update the scientific research which would ensure the renewed approval of the 20 year Regional Forest Agreements (re-approved in 2018) with regard to the following issues:-

Old growth forests, climate change impacts and the status of wildlife impacted by the catastrophic 2019-2020 bushfires. You will remember that 8,000 koalas were incinerated on the mid north coast of NSW, and the estimated toll across the fire impacted states for koalas was around 60,000.

No effort has been made to change the rules to ensure there's 100% protection for their future survival. No required five year review of ecological issues in the carrying out of the previous agreement has happened since 2014.

Scientists estimated that 6 billion animals had died or were homeless as a result of the fires. No changes were made to upgrade the protection of significantly endangered species in any of the states logging native forests. NSW, Victoria and Tasmania continued logging as if there had been no fires.

In December 2023, the Victorian government stopped logging in that state. Western Australia has also ended logging. But NSW and Tasmanian governments have turned deaf ears to the massive protests coming not only from the scientific experts but forest conservation groups, community activists, media, and international concern.

The 20 year approval for Regional Forest Agreements is a bilateral

agreement between the Commonwealth and state governments.

The 20 year approval must first be approved by the Commonwealth government which is supposed to evaluate the status of critical forest issues including ALL species listed under federal legislation.

The agreement allows the states to set their own rules in relation to forestry operations.

In November, 2023 the NSW Land & Environment Court rejected a challenge by the NEFA which focused on the failure to protect NSW endangered species.

The decision by the NSW Court literally removed ANY barriers which the Forestry Corporation might have to jump in terms of protecting endangered species.

As a result of this judgement, every single harvest plan (that allows logging in forest compartments -which must be approved by the Forestry Corporation) no longer has to consider the impacts of industrial logging. **Why?**

The judge's reasoning was that the approval for NSW logging given in 2018 provided all the permission needed. Which means that the 2018 approval is good for the next 20 years. An incredible failure to acknowledge environmental reality.

### APPEALING THE JUDGEMENTS

**As of the timing of this newsletter, AFA is still waiting to find out if there will be appeals against the two judgements.**

Together with our colleague, the Indigenous Justice Advocacy Network we are lobbying the lawyers who represented the NEFA to make the appeal.

These are issues that need to go to the High Court. If there are no appeals, we can kiss goodbye to native forests, wildlife and prepare for life in a concrete jungle with never-ending heatwaves, drought and climate impacts.

The judgements demonstrate Australia's ratification of international conventions to protect biodiversity is not happening. Australia is in non-compliance but there's no rights for public citizens to launch legal actions to force governments to do the right thing.

### YES. IT'S PRETTY DEPRESSING BUT....

**Given the two court decisions, most of us who have fought so long and hard against the industrial logging of our native forests, are in despair.**

The lack of any significant media coverage has ensured that the general public has no idea that the NSW, Tasmanian and Commonwealth governments are dedicated to ensuring there are no stop lights when it comes to wiping out our native forests and dependent wildlife and ecosystems.

We are all utterly dependent on our native forests. Forests bring rain, trees stabilise soil, trees provide shelter and food for countless species. Scientists say that the only way Australia can reach zero car-



bon emissions is to **STOP LOGGING NATIVE FORESTS NOW.**

But the political parties currently governing our country are fixated on growth.. at any cost. This past year over 600,000 immigrants landed in Australia, our population is now 27 million. An increase not anticipated until 2050! Some years ago, Professor Tim Flannery predicted Australia's carrying capacity was 11 million people.

People are suffering enormous cost of living increases, housing is a nightmare, trying to find schools, getting medical, dental appointments – we are paying a terrible cost for these massive population increases.

Our unique, iconic wildlife species are rapidly becoming refugees in their own country.



**PLEASE HELP SAVE THE KOALAS**

[givenow.com.au/koalacrisis](http://givenow.com.au/koalacrisis)

# SOME HELP IS COMING...

***AFA is deeply involved in the forest fight. Those of you who have supported the charity for many years know that we have focused on this issue for the past four years with many lawyers involved.***

Working with the Indigenous Justice Advocacy Network for the last three years, AFA has undertaken complex research of the extremely complex issues forestry operations present.

Governments have made legal challenges well-nigh impossible, both at the state and federal level, particularly in NSW. Courageous and dedicated Victorians were able to use a mandatory Code (not available in NSW) to force the government to stop logging.

Tasmania's Bob Brown Foundation has launched legal challenges without success as the state's magnificent forests are bulldozed down.

Although the North East Forest Alliance was able to get two legal challenges happening in NSW and federally, both judgements went against any forest protection.

So we are left with an impossible situation. Governments who will not listen to the people. Koalas, Greater Gliders and countless species of forest dwelling fauna, flora and invertebrates left to die as the forestry juggernaut rolls on.

## BUT...

AFA has always been helped by one of NSW's best special counsels. (The equivalent of a QC, the highest level of the legal profession – except for



judges). He is very experienced in forestry issues.

After a long conference call we have established two possible legal challenges which would not involve the issues which the two previous judgements ruled against.

The charity is also getting a great deal of assistance from Environmental Justice, the public

interest law firm in Victoria responsible for the victories gained by forestry activists in that state.

Of course the work involved is again a mountain of research! But we can't stop. There's too much to lose.

There's no way we can promise success. But unless we try, the future for forests is extremely grim.

# A LACK OF CO-OPERATION

***One of the problems facing the survival of our wildlife is the lack of cooperation in the conservation community. Big groups don't talk to small groups.***

One of the biggest problems is the failure of the big conservation organizations to focus on massive population growth with the major parties' policies dedicated to 50 million by 2050. Over 600,000 foreign students and immigrants have come in this year.

This is insanity. Australia is not reaching its carbon emissions target, we can't do that while continuing to give approvals to the fossil fuel industry and logging native forests. Every person accounts for a minimum of 22 tonnes per person annually.

Mainstream media continues to ignore the plight of forest dwelling species, or of the forests themselves. The judgement which allowed Forestry Corp to deny environmental responsibility in its harvest plans should be front page news.

Small groups do the hard yards, with people doing tree sits, raising

funds to cover providing food and primitive shelters for activists barring the forestry industry.

After the two court judgements, there was a desperate need for a major press conference in Sydney with as many organisations taking part as possible. Yet nothing happens.

The Green Party could call for a Royal Commission into the failure of NSW, Tasmanian and Commonwealth governments' failures to protect forest fauna and flora.

Zoos and shelters, humane organisations should be shouting loudly about the need to protect Koalas and Greater Gliders, Swift Parrots and so many other species.

If you live in an electorate with a Labor MP, its time to send a message of your disgust over the dismal, non-existent wildlife policies.



# WHY AFA NEEDS FUNDS

***AFA has always been extremely careful with how funds are spent. We have commissioned expert legal advices for court cases, donated grants to small shelters in desperate need of funds and assisted community groups doing the hard yards.***

Our Koala Crisis page on Face-Book is probably the only wildlife page that doesn't continually ask for funds. The charity focuses on specific needs and only fundraises when it's necessary.

The charity knows people are having tough times with the cost of living. Bottom line? Unless there's a dedicated effort to bring these governments to account, to force change either by legal efforts or

media campaigns, nothing will change.

Except the future. AFA is certain that no parents or grandparents wish to leave the next generation a lifeless continent with the remnants of our wildlife in zoos and shelters.

***AFA will not give up. Nor must you.***

***For the Animals,  
Sue Arnold & Friends.***



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