



MEDIA RELEASE

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Logging laws will destroy thousands of hectares of some of the world's most diverse forests

New logging laws released by the NSW Government this week sacrifice environmental protection to timber extraction, according to all the state's leading forest conservation groups.

The groups have warned the proposed changes will degrade large areas of publicly owned native forests and quickly render them unfit for native species.

The proposed sweeping changes to laws called Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals will:

- **Increase logging intensity throughout public native forests**, including allowing high-intensity logging to 140,000ha of coastal forests between Taree and Grafton, enabling clear-felling of areas up to 45ha in one go. This will convert of biologically complex, natural forests into monocultures.
- **Permit logging in stream buffer zones that are currently out of bounds for logging**. These areas are the most important refuges for threatened species left in many forests, including gliders and quolls.
- **Put previously protected old-growth forest at risk of logging** by remapping these high-conservation-value areas. Old-growth forests are rare and provide vital refuges for threatened species, including large owls and gliders.
- **Remove the requirement to identify and exclude logging from Koala High Use Areas**, increasing the threats to Koalas.

NSW National Parks Association CEO Alix Goodwin said: "The changes are driven by the government's commitment to maintaining timber volumes under sawmill wood supply agreements, despite the timber not being available. This move strips all pretence of sustainability away from logging in NSW. An industry that is intensively logging koala and glider habitat can no longer claim that it's 'world's best practice'. Who around the world wants wood that costs koala lives? No-one."

NSW Nature Conservation Council CEO Kate Smolski said: "This is a major attack on our native forests that the conservation movement will vigorously oppose at every opportunity. These measures could trash large areas of old-growth forests, which are among the most important refuges on earth for an astonishing array of species, including koalas and quolls and other threatened wildlife."

South East Region Conservation Alliance spokesperson Harriett Swift said: "Woodchipping has been destroying forests in southern NSW for decades and government's own reports show timber supplies are exhausted¹. Woodchipping has never had a social license and it never will."

Bellingen Environment Centre spokesperson Ashley Love said: “These changes throw out 40 years of progress in gradually protecting forests and the industry has raised the white flag on protecting the environment in logging operations. The court of public opinion will pass harsh judgement when the impacts become clear.”

North East Forest Alliance spokesperson Dailan Pugh said: The NSW Government has so far spent \$13 million buying back grossly over-estimated and over-committed sawlogs from public forests. This decision is about getting a foot in the door to begin logging of protected old-growth forests to make up growing shortfalls, at ever increasing volumes as other forests are cut out.

North Coast Environment Council spokesperson Susie Russell said: “It’s there in black and white in the reports¹: the intensification of logging on the north coast will convert beautiful, complex forests to uniform stands of blackbutt, far less useful for wildlife. All to meet wood contracts that were signed without due diligence. Shame on them.”

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¹NSW Department of Primary Industries. *Review of Coastal Hardwood Wood Supply Agreements - Final Report*, <https://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/720619/review-of-coastal-hardwood-wood-supply-agreements.pdf> (2017).

²<https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/29948/documents/77095>