



## South East Region Conservation Alliance Inc

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### **Federal Government Biodiversity Funding Puts the Fox in Charge of the Henhouse.**

The integrity of the Biodiversity Fund allocations has been challenged by the South East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA), following the grant of \$1,935,000 over six years to Forests NSW (FNSW) to temporarily protect 2,800 ha of core koala habitat, create "harvest" exclusion zones on State Forest and support initiatives to locate alternative timber resources.

"Whilst we support in principle the Biodiversity Fund as part of the Clean Energy Future, and other successful project funding, putting FNSW in charge of a significant far south coast biodiversity grant is a recipe for disaster, said Prue Acton, spokesperson for the South East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA). "The business of Forests NSW is to log forests, fulfill logging contracts and provide jobs for loggers, not protect the environment."

"This project has all the hallmarks of shoring up the Regional Forests Agreements (RFA) that has allowed FNSW and the forestry industry to contribute significantly to wildlife loss and damage to water supplies and forest carbon stocks," said Ms Acton. "It provides FNSW with an additional pool of funds to prolong its environmental damage."

According to SERCA, the plan that FNSW has developed for vulnerable southeast koala recovery will offer three distinct areas of no logging to protect the koalas, with no connectivity with each other or with other areas where koalas have been sighted.

Dr Alistair Metzler told the Senate Inquiry Proceedings last year that the SE NSW koalas are "... the most critical population in Australia in the sense that they may represent one of only two reservoirs, very small ones, of what is the native genotype of all the animals in Victoria and South Australia left".

"The protection being offered to koalas is temporary, disjointed and will require more logging of other areas to make up for woodchip trees lost to logging from the moratorium areas. If it helps some koalas, it could be at the expense of other koalas (for example, recently sighted animals in Tanja) and other species of forest animals," said Harriett Swift from SERCA."

"There is also funding allocated for FNSW to 'identify further wood supplies' which is bureaucratic code for buying in saw logs - probably from itself - from another region," said Ms Swift

"This is to compensate it for the saw logs foregone from the moratorium areas during the moratorium period. To provide for woodchips foregone, there will inevitably be more intensive logging elsewhere This is a brazen example of using funds supposedly intended to protect forest dwellers being used to prop up the industry which is killing them," said Ms. Swift.

"We need to an end to business as usual of industrialized logging practices driven by woodchipping. Industry restructuring out of native forest logging and completing the transition to plantations is long overdue", said Prue Acton

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