

Andrews's government takes welcome step towards improved management and protection of some of Victoria's amazing native forests

- Industrial logging out of native forests by 2030 but should be sooner
- Logging immediately exempted from almost 100,000 hectares of special forests
- Greater certainty for Greater Glider and 90,000 hectares of old growth

The Andrews government has announced an end to native forest logging by 2030, and millions of dollars to support the industry. Support for industrial forestry workers facing inevitable change accompanies 'immediate protection' for some special forests, and a greater level of certainty for the threatened Greater Glider and old growth forests. The Wilderness Society has been campaigning for greater protections of Victoria's forests for decades.

Wilderness Society Victorian Campaigns Manager Amelia Young says: "Today's announcements are a welcome step towards managing and protecting Victoria's forests in line with community expectations and supporting families in regional towns through inevitable industry change.

"For too long, Victoria's native forests have been badly managed and overlogged. The industry's future is in plantations and recycled fibre, which is where security lies for the 1,000 workers remaining in the industry. We welcome the government's long-overdue acknowledgement of this.

"Victorians consistently say they want their forests protected. Today, after years of obfuscating, the Victorian state government has finally announced an immediate end to logging in some special forests in eastern Victoria—this is a creditable, initial step towards creating the Great Forest National Park, and the Emerald Link in East Gippsland.

"Minister Lily D'Ambrosio and the government are to be congratulated for achieving these important breakthroughs. Government is implementing inevitable changes for the industrial forestry industry out of recognition that unsustainable logging simply cannot continue forever.

"Some important forests are now spared the chopping block and the woodchipping machines. These forests need permanent protection, which the Andrews government must now put in place.

"An end date for native forest logging cannot come soon enough. 2030 is still a decade away—and continuing to log and burn Critically Endangered forests that supply Melbourne's drinking water, in a warming and drying climate, is just not credible. The policy to end logging by 2030 should happen earlier, and must be guaranteed.

Date: 7/11/2019



“The forests have been so badly mismanaged, it’s not sustainable to keep logging them. We need every stick of forest to remain standing for a range of values, rather than destroyed and wasted by just being woodchipped and pulped to make paper and cardboard products.”

On the Greater Glider: Since it was first added to the Victorian threatened species list in 2017, the Vulnerable Greater Glider has been without the legally mandated Action Plan to recover its populations, which have crashed by 80% over the last 20 years due to logging and bushfire.

“This threatened species shouldn’t have had to wait for a deal with the industry to be finalised, but least the Greater Glider now has an Action Plan, as is required by law. The real test will be whether state government loggers honour that Action Plan, and whether the government will keep an eye on its own loggers and ensure they adhere to regulations, especially so long as industrial forestry is not required to comply with national environment law because of the Regional Forest Agreements.”

On retailers: Timber and paper retailers are increasingly concerned about old growth logging, and wood from endangered wildlife habitat, being sold in products in their stores. Major retailers have expectations that the state government’s forest managers, VicForests, attain Full Forest Management FSC certification by end 2020.

The timing of today’s announcements coincides with the upcoming audit of VicForests logging operations against the FSC Controlled Wood standard by SCS Global, which will be VicForests’ fourth attempt in a decade to obtain this credentialled certification.

—ENDS—

For more information: Amelia Young 0404 074 577

For media assistance: Tim Beshara 0437 878 786