



# THE GREENS

## PROTECTING OUR FORESTS FOR THE FUTURE: GREENS FORESTRY LAUNCH

The Greens have a detailed package to protect this State's almost 2 million hectares of State Native Forest. This is a priceless environmental asset that needs to be managed for everyone, so that our environment is protected, taxpayers benefit and more people can have more access to these beautiful places.

Currently State Native Forests are managed to benefit a small loss making woodchip and logging industry. NSW taxpayers have lost more than \$40 million from logging State Native Forests over the past 4 years according to Forestry Corporation figures obtained by the Greens.<sup>[1]</sup> In 2014 NSW tax payers lost \$12 million dollars by logging 23,807 hectares of State native forests.<sup>[2]</sup>

Logging native forests not only destroys beautiful forests containing essential habitat for native plants and animals, but it leaves the tax payer well in the red. The Forestry Corporation continues to subsidise private contractors and loggers to the tune of millions of dollars a year.

On average NSW taxpayers lose \$495 for every hectare of State Native Forest that they allow to be logged. This is in stark contrast to the average \$5,837 that taxpayers benefit for every hectare harvested in the much smaller plantation estate. Last year alone State-owned plantations delivered \$48 million in profit harvesting 8,223 hectares of plantation timber. This is the future of the State's forestry industry, not loss making and destructive logging of native forests.

### THE GREENS 2015 FOREST PACKAGE HAS 6 KEY POINTS:

#### Key points:

1. An end to all logging and mining in State Native Forests by 2016;
2. High conservation State Native Forest to be immediately transferred to the National Park estate;
3. Balance of State Native Forest to be managed by Department of Environment (not Department of Primary Industries) so that:
  - a. Environmental values are highest priority;
  - b. Wildlife corridors are reforested and protected;
  - c. Recreational activities consistent with environmental values are promoted; and
  - d. Eco-tourism and Aboriginal cultural activities are promoted.
4. An \$80 million 4 year transition package for timber workers and communities impacted by the end of native forestry operations;
5. Plantation forestry profits invested in increased planting for both soft-wood and hard wood timber.
6. A \$40 million 4 year forestry-related tourism and recreation grant scheme to promote access to, and investment in, the remaining state forest estate.



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## **Ending logging is a win for the environment, recreation and the economy:**

For decades NSW State Native Forests have been plundered for woodchips to deliver fewer and fewer jobs and ever greater environmental and financial losses to taxpayers.

Ending logging will allow for high conservation forest to be immediately added to the National Park estate, filling in the gaps in places such as:

- (a) Gardens of Stone State Forest (Blue Mountains);
- (b) Tanja and Mumbulla State Forests (South Coast);
- (c) Wedding Bells and Royal Camp State Forests (Mid North and North Coast)
- (d) Pilliga, Glen Elgin and Gibraltar Range State Forests (West and North West NSW)

Less high conservation State Native Forest will be managed by the Department of Environment to ensure that wildlife corridors are restored and retained and environmental outcomes are the priority. Within the remaining state forest estate the ending of logging will create significant opportunities for recreational engagement and sensitive investment. This includes:

- (a) Creative eco-tourism opportunities including forest lodges and multi-day regional walking initiatives;
- (b) Aboriginal cultural access including low impact commercial operations by traditional owners; and
- (c) Far greater recreational access for bush walkers, mountain bikers, day trippers, horse and trail bike riders in a forest estate that is not being devastated by logging.

This access is to be managed by the Department of Environment with environmental values being the prime consideration. Done well it will greatly limit the commercial and recreational pressure on National Parks while delivering far greater access to, and social and economic benefit from, revitalised State Native Forests.

## **Funded initiatives:**

Last year alone state-owned plantations delivered taxpayers well over \$40 million in profit from over \$200 million in revenue each year, in a jobs rich, environmentally sustainable regional industry. This plantation estate props up Forestry Corporation's chronic loss-making native forestry operations. The annual losses of native forestry operations have averaged \$14 million. This must end.

Ending Native Forestry operations, and reinvesting plantation profits will free up resources to invest in:

- (a) An \$80 million 4 year transition package for timber workers and communities impacted by ending native forestry operations;
- (b) increased investment in jobs rich state-owned plantation reserves; and
- (c) A \$40 million 4 year forestry-related tourism, Aboriginal cultural and recreation grant scheme to promote access to, and investment in, the remaining state forest estate.

The transition package will be available for retraining and financial assistance packages for workers who suffer financially as a result of the end of native forestry operations. This includes retraining and priority jobs access to new jobs created in an expanded plantation estate. Funding will also be available for community projects designed to assist in the transition.

The transition package will include significant investment in buying back unsustainable wood supply contracts entered into by the NSW government over the past 2 decades. Unsustainable wood supply agreements are already costing tax payers with the Forestry corporation spending more than \$8.5 million purchasing back North Coast contracts last financial year.

The tourism, cultural and recreational package is designed to promote innovative and sustainable projects within the State Native Forest estate. This includes projects such as tree-top rope parks, regional multi-day walk development, local walking tracks, bridle and bike tracks and low impact forest lodges.

[1] Forestry Corporation 2013-14 Sustainability Supplement page 26

[2] Forestry Corporation 2013-14 Sustainability Supplement page 16