

FRANCES ALEXANDER

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Topic 2. Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values

I am a 77 year old woman. I have children and grandchildren. I have been watching for years the destruction of our forests. I have also been watching the incredible decline of our native species. 29 bird species have become extinct since Australia was colonized. 60 bird species are endangered and 68 have become vulnerable.

The forest is home to many of these birds. For 40,000 years the Aboriginal people lived in harmony with the land. Custodians of the birds and the animals. In less than 250 years we have changed whole landscapes, cutting down forests and altering the whole ecology. We know that hemp and bamboo can be easily grown to replace many of the function of timber. I cannot understand why we continue to cut down forests when we know how disadvantageous it is to birds, animals and people. We know we are changing the climate by refusing to act appropriately, such as leaving coal in the ground and trees in the forest. What will we tell our grandchildren when they ask why there are no swift parrots any more and what happened to them. How can we hold our heads up when we have done so little to protect what is really valuable. Have the people who order the cutting of trees in state forests ever stood in the forest and marveled at the abundance of life there is in a forest?

I wont have long in my lifetime to endure many of the "unprecedented" weather events that are occurring. Trees are the lungs of the planet. Please can't someone stop the destruction of state forests before it is too late for our grandchildren,