

**THE
BUSH'S
LAST
STAND**

FOREST ALLIANCE NSW



28 October 2024

The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for the Environment
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

CC:

The Hon. Tara Moriarty, Minister for Agriculture
Mr Peter Duncan AM, Chair Independent Forestry Panel

RE: Seeking interim protections for threatened species habitat in NSW state forests

Dear Minister Sharpe,

Earlier this month the Forest Alliance NSW published a report, [NATURE NEGATIVE: How governments are pushing greater gliders towards extinction in NSW.](#)

The report documents the results of ground surveys and thermal drone surveys, conducted by community volunteers and professional drone pilots engaged by Alliance member groups, in areas expected to contain significant populations of greater gliders and at imminent risk of logging.

The results are stark. Community surveys were 10 times more effective at identifying greater glider den trees compared to Forestry Corporation (FCNSW). Based on the unjustifiable requirement that FCNSW only have to survey 10% of compartment areas prior to logging, and their low rate of success at identifying den trees, our report estimates just 1% of den trees are identified in FCNSW pre-logging surveys.

Whilst community surveys have resulted in more den sightings and therefore have generated logging exclusions, we cannot survey all areas in high density glider habitat. For most of the gliders we observe we have not been able to identify their dens. Despite our efforts, the reality is that most glider den trees have not been identified and are at risk of being, if not likely to be felled when logging commences in these areas.

Even if observed den trees are protected, logging in these areas will have hugely disruptive impacts on greater glider populations - noting that native forest logging is listed as a key threatening process for this listed endangered species.

Several of the forests identified in our report are now being logged or have been changed to active on the plan portal and logging is imminent. This logging represents a significant risk to the integrity of some of the most critical refuges identified for the greater glider.

Whilst just four state forest areas were identified in the report, Alliance members have continued to survey in other areas on both the North and South Coast. This has demonstrated to us that whilst there are areas of high density glider populations across NSW, there are many areas where they cannot be found or are present in very small numbers. The areas of high density are therefore critical refugia for this species. It has also given us the ability to predict the likely distribution of high densities of glider populations across state forests. This is critical information that should trigger appropriate actions to protect these areas.

The NSW Government is currently undertaking a process to develop a Forestry Industry Action Plan (FIAP) as well as establishing the Great Koala National Park (GKNP). The Alliance members have welcomed both of these processes and are engaging constructively with them.

A significant part of these consultations is the identification of ecological values in state forests currently available for logging. Allowing ongoing logging while these processes are completed, especially in areas of known high density populations of threatened and endangered species such as the koala, greater glider and yellow bellied glider risks the degradation of these ecological values before a plan can be developed and implemented.

The Forest Alliance NSW is urging you to act on our report findings and information already held by the Government with regard to population densities to put in place interim protections for areas of high ecological value for these species while the FIAP process is completed. This would be an interim measure to ensure these critical values are not lost during the FIAP and GKNP processes and to allow for a more fully developed response to permanently protect these values.

The Alliance is seeking the following:

- an immediate halt to current logging operations Badja, Bulga, Styx River, Hyland state forests until these protections are in place.
- Interim protections put in place throughout the period of the Independent Forestry Panel's assessment and until Cabinet makes a final decision on the FIAP including the following areas:
 - The mapped greater glider core habitat contained in the attached document.
 - All remaining Koala Hubs in the state (this information is held by the NSW Environment Department).
 - All areas identified with high densities of Koala, Greater Glider and Yellow-bellied Gliders (this information is held by the NSW Environment Department)
- A process for the community to be able to nominate additional sites for protection if data is collected on new threatened species core habitat areas.

We have prepared mapping (attached) to reflect these critical areas for the koala and greater gliders.

These maps also reflect the ongoing calls of Alliance members for a moratorium on all logging within the Great Koala National Park proposed footprint.

The Alliance member groups support an evidence based assessment to inform the future of the timber industry in NSW. We have been playing a constructive role in that process including in collecting data to inform the process. We are asking you to act on this evidence and ensure the opportunity to protect the most critical areas of habitat for our iconic koala and greater glider is not lost while this process is finalised.

We look forward to an urgent response to this letter. For further information on this proposal, contact Justin Field on [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

Justin Field
Forest Alliance NSW