



MEDIA RELEASE: 13 September 2010

EPA forest audit finds jarrah logging unsustainable

Call for immediate cessation of logging in low and intermediate rainfall forests

WA's forest conservation groups have called for an immediate cessation of logging and clearing in jarrah forests in the low and intermediate rainfall zones following the release of the EPA's 'Mid-term audit' of the implementation of the current WA Forest Management Plan (FMP).

In its audit released today, the EPA has stated, *'[I]t is most unlikely that the jarrah forest in the low and adjacent medium rainfall areas, particularly in the northern forest, can continue to contribute to the jarrah sustained yield and also be consistent with ecologically sustainable forest management (ESFM).'*

Jess Beckerling from the WA Forest Alliance, WA's peak forest conservation body, said the EPA's report confirmed the fears of conservationists that climate change, declining rainfall, dieback and a history of unsustainable logging and mining had placed large parts of the jarrah forest at risk of ecological collapse.

"As the EPA has stated in this audit, '[T]he nature and scale of threats to the forest appear to be increasing and the combining of some of these threats over time and in parts of the forest is placing considerable stress on the values of the forest.'"

"Under these circumstances, all logging and clearing should be stopped immediately in these forests in order to give them some chance of recovery and survival", said Ms Beckerling.

Piers Verstegen, Director of the Conservation Council, said the EPA report also confirms that management of WA forest industries has suffered from a systematic breakdown in compliance monitoring and a lack of enforcement of conditions put in place to protect the environment.

"We have known for years that government regulators are failing to take the logging industry to task for serious management problems including ongoing breaches of conditions put in place to protect the forests and the species they contain. This situation demonstrates that it is not possible to manage a native forest logging industry in a way that is ecologically sustainable."

"The EPA says, 'Governance arrangements related to planning and management of the forest regions need to be reviewed and modified... The current statutory roles of the Conservation Commission, DEC and the Forest Products Commission (FPC) are not effective in ensuring delivery of and compliance with the approved FMP.'"

Peter Robertson, State Coordinator for the Wilderness Society (WA), supported the EPA's call for work to commence immediately on a new Forest Management Plan, and said that the new FMP should end all logging, thinning and clearing in WA's native forests.

*Further comment: Jess Beckerling (Walpole): 9840 1876
Peter Robertson: 0409 089 020*

Piers Verstegen: 0411 557 892

