



## Victorian Government urged to end native forest logging

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As the federal government considers joining the global push to halt deforestation by 2030 at COP27 this week, the Victorian government is facing calls at home to end native forest logging and protect the forests that provide critical services for Victorians.

Doctors for the Environment (DEA) member Dr Jennifer Conway, also member of the DEA Biodiversity Special Interest group, said the DEA was calling for:

- \* Urgent actions to bring forward the 2030 exit from native forest logging, including immediate roll-out of measures to support workers and the forestry industry.

- \* Full consultation and shared decision making with Traditional Owners.

- \* Declaration of the Great Forest National Park by the State Government in this term of office.

"When forests are degraded or lost, the essentials for life are compromised – our water resources, the air we breathe and the stability of our weather and climate," Dr Conway said.

"We also lose the vital contributions our forests make to our physical and psychological health and wellbeing," she explained.

Native forest logging in Victoria, (VicForests) posted a loss of \$23 million in 2021 after government grants of \$18 million were excluded from profits.

"The Parliamentary Budget Office has calculated that ending native forest logging in 2023 will save Victoria \$205 million over the next decade," Dr Conway said.

Dr Conway said the Albanese government was on the cusp of joining a global push to halt deforestation by 2030, driving the use of agriculture and forestry land as a source of carbon and biodiversity credits that could generate income for farmers from big business and offshore markets.

Labor is understood to be considering adding Australia's name to a "high ambition" group of nations at the forefront of the changes at this week's COP27 in Egypt.

"Protecting and restoring native forests is essential climate change action if Australia is to meet its net-zero targets," Dr Conway said.

"Only old growth forests can remove carbon from the atmosphere at the scale and time required.

"Native forest logging is terrible for the climate. Young forests take decades or centuries to absorb carbon but we don't have time to wait that long, we need to reduce our emissions now."

**ENDS**

**For further comment please contact Dr Jennifer Conway on 0417 586 567**