

4 September 2024

Mr Peter Duncan AM  
Chair, Independent Forestry Panel  
Email: forestryiap@ipcn.nsw.gov.au

**RE: Request for meeting with Independent Forestry Panel**

Dear Mr Duncan,

Congratulations on your appointment as chair of the Independent Forestry Panel tasked with providing advice to the NSW Government on the development of a Forestry Industry Action Plan.

The Forest Alliance NSW is an alliance of environmental NGOs and community groups across NSW working to end native forest logging in NSW.

Alliance members have advocated for the development of a forestry transition plan to rapidly complete the shift from native forest logging to a plantations-based timber and fibre sector, and the full protection and restoration of public native forests.

As part of this, the Alliance has advocated for scientists with expertise in forest ecology and conservation to be centrally engaged in advising the government in development of this plan.

We recently wrote to Premier Minns outlining our expectations for this process and provide a copy of that letter for your information.

We do have concerns about the lack of specific forest ecology expertise on your panel. We note that when challenged in budget estimates last week on this point, Premier Minns made clear that the panel would “get the information necessary to make good judgements in the best interests of the people of New South Wales.”

We urge you to act on that expectation and engage independent forest ecology expertise, separate to any advice provided by government departments and the Natural Resources Commission, to assist you in your work. In particular we think it is essential that there be independent analysis about the impact of native forest logging and effectiveness of current logging protocols on forest ecosystems and forest dependent species and that this analysis should be available publicly as part of your panel's review process. The Alliance would welcome an opportunity to suggest suitably qualified and experienced experts to provide that input.

In addition to the request above, the Alliance is seeking an urgent meeting with yourself and the other panel members to discuss our expectations of the assessment process, including that:

1. The Alliance will be engaged in an inclusive and transparent manner in all aspects of the panel assessment.
2. The panel process will include an opportunity for the general public to make submissions.
3. The panel will examine and provide an option to the Government to end public native forest logging and complete the shift towards a plantation based timber industry in NSW.
4. The panel process will be public and transparent and information used to inform analysis should not be restricted under commercial-in-confidence or cabinet-in confidence provisions unless absolutely necessary. Where this is deemed necessary the existence of any such information, the nature of the information, the author or owner and reason for its non-disclosure should be made available to stakeholders.
5. Forestry Corporation be required to make raw data underpinning yield and wood supply assumptions, including the impact of the 2019/20 bushfires on wood supply forecasts, public and available for independent analysis and peer review.
6. Local Land Services and the Department of Primary Industries be required to make data relating to Private Native Forestry harvesting volumes and/or forecasts for PNF harvesting, public and available for independent analysis and peer review.

The Panel must have access to Forestry Corporation's raw and modeled data on wood resource supplies. This data is critical to the Panel's assessment of the sustainability of the native forest sector, but has not been made available to government, timber sector and environment organisations in the past. Modeled wood resource availability must include the impacts of the 2019/20 bushfires, the need to protect habitat of threatened species such as koalas and greater gliders, and the need to protect carbon dense forests to drive down logging emissions

The Alliance also urges the panel to consider, from the earliest stages of your work, making interim recommendations to the NSW Government for a moratorium on logging from certain areas of state forests for the duration of the FIAP assessment process.

In particular this should be considered in native state forest with high densities of, or otherwise of critical importance to, listed endangered species, particularly koalas and greater gliders.

The NSW Government has recognised the need for the Great Koala National Park to address the risks to this iconic endangered species. Allowing logging to continue while park assessment takes place, which is occurring now, is unjustifiable and undermines the credibility of the Panel's work.

The Alliance has also demonstrated the inadequacies of current provisions in logging protocols for Great Glider protections and identified areas providing significant refuge for this species that are at risk of logging within the period of your assessment. We would like the opportunity to provide this evidence to you early in this process and urge you to be open to making interim recommendations to protect these most critical areas through a moratorium on logging.

We would also encourage the panel members to attend a field trip with the Alliance at the earliest opportunity to see the value of thermal drone surveys in being able to identify the presence of threatened species and the location of critical habitat. It is inexplicable why this technology isn't being more widely used by the Forestry Corporation to avoid logging impacts on threatened species.

The Alliance stands ready to engage constructively in a public and transparent process that is evidence based, will genuinely assess an exit from native forest logging and recognises the central role of environmental stakeholders in developing policies affecting the future of our public native forests.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss these aspects of the panel's work.

Justin Field can be contacted on 0439 205 835 or [justin@foretalliancensw.org](mailto:justin@foretalliancensw.org) to arrange a meeting.

Kind regards,

*Justin Field*

Justin Field  
Forest Alliance NSW