



South East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA)

# Media Release

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## Forests critical to Paris climate pledge says Greg Hunt but will the logging stop?

Conservationists welcome a statement after the Paris Climate Summit by by Federal Environment Minister, Greg Hunt, that we need to look beyond fossil fuel emissions to the natural systems for carbon storage - rainforests, mangroves, sea grass and forests in implementing this "most important international environment pledge for climate action."

**BROWN CARBON IN SOIL**

Prue Acton, spokesperson for the South East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA) said, "Up to 15% percent of the world's emissions are from degradation and deforestation of natural forests – that is the intensive industrial logging of natural forests and the clearance of others for palm oil plantations, cropland and grazing land."

"Australia has to join in forest protection towards a safer future and stop logging its natural forests. The opportunity now exists to restore Australia's International standing in relation to climate change and to address the broad range of issues."

Noel Plumb of SERCA said, "If Mr Hunt is fair dinkum, the Federal Government must immediately drop its irresponsible, anti-environment and plain silly Abbott era law to allow natural forests to be wood-chipped and burnt as electricity fuel supplies with Green Energy subsidies paid for by the taxpayer."

Conservationists across Australia and the great majority of the public also want the Federal and State Governments to drop the devastating Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) that drive the logging and woodchipping that is destroying the forests and their wildlife while adding massively to greenhouse emissions.

"Protecting our natural forests, their huge carbon stores (because of eucalypt hardwood densities) and unique wildlife is of the highest priority. SERCA looks forward to positive action from Mr Hunt and his Cabinet colleagues," he said.

"State Forests should become conservation and recreation reserves across the country with massive job opportunities in landscape restoration, park management, tourism and visitor services," said Mr Plumb.

"For instance, "95% of International visitors to New South Wales come for Nature based experiences - here is Australia's opportunity to promote a real clean and green image as we let our ancient and beautiful forests do much of the heavy lifting to cool the planet."

"Existing plantations with new milling technology can provide all the timber and woodchips this country needs."

"Natural forests are not only the best land based carbon stores, but critical for fresh water, healthy soil and our unique wildlife such as endangered Koalas, Swift Parrots and hollow dependent gliders like the Greater Glider." said Ms Acton.