

MEDIA RELEASE: 12 June 2020

Conservationists urge stronger Federal protection for forest wildlife

The South East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA) has [written](#) to the Federal Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley urging a more proactive role for the Commonwealth in protecting forests and wildlife.

SERCA believes that the recent Federal Court [Leadbeaters Possum case](#) in Victoria has made this both possible and necessary.

Dr Bronte Somerset, Secretary of SERCA said that the ‘possum case’ showed conclusively that the States have not been effectively protecting threatened species from logging operations.

“The recent Federal Court decision has sent a [panic through the logging industry](#), which views it as a threat to its legal foundations in all States with Regional Forest Agreements.”

Deputy Convener, Harriett Swift said: “when the Commonwealth and States first signed Regional Forest Agreements over 20 years ago it was on the assumption that State logging laws would protect threatened species and ensure other environmental safeguards.”

Logging was exempted from Australia’s principal environment protection law, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity and Conservation (EPBC) Act.

“The ‘possum case’ demonstrated that protections under State laws have not been adequate.

“Since the release of the judgement on May 27th, the industry and its [paid lobbyists in Canberra](#) have been in overdrive – pressuring the Government to secure its ongoing exemption from the EPBC Act.

Ms Swift said that stronger environmental protections are more important than ever since the catastrophic summer bushfires.

“More than 80 percent of forest available for logging on the South Coast was burnt in the fires and the future of many species is uncertain.

“More than a billion wild animals were killed and some relatively common species had so much of their habitat burnt they are [now considered](#) to be at risk.

“Nonetheless the NSW Government and its Forestry Corporation are going ahead with logging both burnt and unburnt areas of forest, which will have even more adverse outcomes for forest recovery and wildlife survival.

“It is also clear now that industrialised logging has made the forests more fire-prone. We can’t afford more of the same. In the South East we have suffered too much already through the fires and the further bushfire and virus-related economic disaster.

“We need both the Commonwealth and the NSW Governments to resist pressures from self-interested forestry industry lobbyists, give the forests and their wildlife and our region a chance to recover, and do what the overwhelming majority of Australians want: end native forest logging,” Dr Somerset said.

... Ends.



The Greater Glider, listed as "endangered" in the Eurobodalla Shire, was one of the threatened species which featured in the Federal Court 'possum' case.