



THE GREAT FOREST CASE

BEST CHANCE IN A GENERATION
TO END NATIVE FOREST LOGGING

**IT'S TIME TO PUT AN END TO THE
DESTRUCTION OF NATIVE FORESTS**

**BOB BROWN
FOUNDATION**
ACTION FOR EARTH



Photo © Chris Frazes

Bob Brown Foundation has launched a legal case challenging the regulation of native forest logging. Our case will argue that the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) is not a valid agreement. We want to strike down the RFA as it is not protecting any endangered species. It's time to put an end to the destruction of native forests.

What is a Regional Forest Agreement?

Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) are 20-year-old agreements which exempt logging from national environment laws. There are ten RFAs across Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania.

RFAs are outdated agreements which have utterly failed to protect threatened species. These RFAs allow logging of habitat for some of Australia's most critically endangered species, such as Leadbeater's Possum and Swift Parrots.

RFAs allow the Commonwealth Government to have a hands-off approach to forest management, leaving a trail of destruction and pushing species to extinction.

What will our court case argue?

Our case will argue the Tasmanian RFA is invalid on two grounds. Firstly, RFAs need to be legally enforceable. However, not all sections of the RFAs are, most notably the sections that relate to the management of threatened species.

This means that Tasmania (through Sustainable Timber Tasmania) is not legally bound to protect threatened species. This has allowed them to destroy threatened species habitat for decades.

Secondly, the Tasmanian Government can change its legislation, policies, forest practices codes and management plans as it pleases, without input from the Commonwealth Government, providing no guaranteed protection for our wildlife and environment.

This case is being brought against the State and Commonwealth Governments and Sustainable Timber Tasmania and is being run under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

Why is it needed?

This case is the best chance in a generation to end native forest logging.

Over a million hectares of Tasmania's forests are under threat from logging. This includes vast areas of old-growth forests. Home to Australia's largest temperate rainforest, takayna / Tarkine currently has over 28,958 ha of its pristine forests in "permanent logging zones".

Iconic species under serious threat from logging include the Swift Parrot, Masked Owl, Tasmanian Devil and Giant Freshwater Crayfish. The Critically Endangered Swift Parrot is likely to go extinct in the next 10 years without immediate action. Yet under the Tasmanian RFA, Swift Parrot habitat continues to be logged and incinerated.

Implications

This case aims to end native forest logging in Tasmania and potentially the rest of Australia.

If our case is successful, we will seek an immediate injunction to stop Sustainable Timber Tasmania carrying out any logging without the Federal Minister's approval. We will also seek reparation for the damage they have done through logging that breached the EPBC Act.

Photo © Eric Woehler

"We have filed a case in the Federal Court which, if successful, will prove the Tasmanian RFA is illegal and bring all native forest logging in Tasmania to an immediate halt, with the chance to extend this ban to other states."

– Bob Brown.



If we win this case in Tasmania it will set a powerful precedent for similar legal action in other states. There are currently 6 million hectares of Australia's forests available for logging under the RFAs. If similar court cases in other states were successful, it would be a game-changer for native forests and their wildlife right across Australia.

There is a strong track record of environmental groups in Australia winning court cases that challenge RFAs. The 2005 Wielangta case in Tasmania and this year's Leadbeater's Possum case in Victoria were both successful. If we win the Great Forest Case it will be a victory for the environment to rival the Franklin Dam case of 1986.

This is a massive and hugely expensive undertaking and we urgently need funds to support this landmark case. Your tax-deductible donation will help bring an end to native forest logging one step closer.

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