



WA FOREST ALLIANCE

New information reveals end of native forest logging was inevitable

New information revealed in Parliament this week shows that the end of native forest logging in WA was inevitable, and far from being 'blind-sided,' the State's largest remaining timber mill operator was expecting to close its gates by the end of 2021 - before the Premier's announcement was made.

In August this year, Parkside Group, which runs the controversial timber mill in Nannup and is the biggest sawmiller of Jarrah and Karri in the South West, made a request to the Government for a \$25.8 million handout. The company told Government that if this money was not supplied, Parkside Group mills would close by the 31st of December 2021.

"Parkside Group came into WA in late 2019 when the Nannup and Greenbushes mills were struggling to stay afloat and bought them in the hope that it could make a quick profit in the dying days of the industry," said Jess Beckerling, convener of the WA Forest Alliance.

"The industry has been in steady decline for more than a decade. It no longer turns a profit to the State and employment has been increasingly insecure. There are around 400 people left in the sector, and every contractor I have spoken to in the past couple of years has been fully aware that the industry was on its last legs.

"Clearly Parkside has found that the industry is not viable, and they have gone to Government for a huge sum of money that Government has decided to spend somewhere else, with more promise for workers and the broader WA community.

"This reality, coupled with the impacts of climate change on the forests and on timber yields; the fact that 95% of West Australians recently called for greater forest protections in the WA Forest Survey; and that the socio-economic factors clearly show that forest protection is better for the South West than logging is, has meant that the end of native forest logging was inevitable.

"Now we can look forward to sustainable industries in the South West, including honey production, tourism, recreation and the plantation sector, getting the support that they need to grow and thrive," said Ms Beckerling.

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