

**END
FOREST
MINING**
Expansion

WAFA

Media Release

Date 27th November 2023

Release 154 Australian Scientists call for an end to Alcoa's Jarrah Forest destruction

WA Forest Alliance Welcomes Today's Public Announcement from 154 of Australia's Most Distinguished Scientists – who have For the First Time – Publicly Voiced Formal Concern about Alcoa's Destruction of Western Australian Jarrah Forests

'Now, 154 of Australia's top scientists are bravely standing up and saying enough is enough. The community of Western Australia and our political leaders must listen to them and urgently review independent and scholarly research.'

THE WA Forest Alliance (WAFA) says the WA community and political leadership must listen to the country's top scientists – it's time to stop Alcoa destroying the Jarrah Forest in Western Australia.

WAFA welcomes a call by 154 renowned scientists in Australia to halt the destruction of one of the world's most important and biodiverse forests, the Western Australian Jarrah Forest.

"Today 154 of Australia's most distinguished scientists have made the extraordinary step of publishing a joint letter in state-wide media, voicing their concern about Alcoa destroying Western Australian Jarrah forests," said Jess Beckerling, Director of WAFA.

"This is a tremendously important step in the fight to preserve our precious Jarrah Forest. The forest is a global treasure of precious, invaluable flora and fauna, and it has given enough. We must protect our forest for future generations.

"As more of our community, including the mining and energy industry generally, understand how damaging large-scale strip mining is in native forests, Alcoa is fast becoming a pariah among its peers.

"The forest currently supports the livelihoods of thousands of people in WA – from tourism and recreation operators to hospitality businesses, apiarists and agribusinesses. Ongoing mining is putting their jobs at risk. We need an integrated socio-economic plan for the region that creates additional high-quality jobs in sustainable sectors so that there can be a just transition out of strip-mining the forests.

"In 2023, most people understand you can't mine everywhere. The Jarrah Forest has immense environmental, social and climate value. And now, 153 of Australia's top scientists are bravely standing up and saying enough is enough. The community of Western Australia and our political leaders must listen to them and urgently review independent and scholarly research."

End Forest Mining is an alliance of many groups, representing tens of thousands of people. We are calling on the Cook Government to end forest mining and protect WA's magnificent forests in National Parks.

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The statement – published today in The West Australian newspaper – was organised by The Leeuwin Group of Scientists which includes Prof Fiona Stanley, Prof Kingsley Dixon, Prof Graeme Pearman, Prof Richard Hobbs, Prof Hans Lambers, Prof John Bailey, Prof Don Bradshaw, A/Prof Philip Zylstra and Dr Joanna Young.

The list of 154 scientists who have supported the statement also include Prof Tim Flannery, and many senior academics working at universities around Australia.

The Statement said:

“We, the scientists of Australia urge the WA Government and community of WA to listen to the science and halt the destruction of one of the World’s most important and biodiverse temperate forests – for future generations, for the sake of the planet and to avert an extinction catastrophe.

Each year Alcoa clear and mine up to 8 km² with the loss of 60,000 mature, centuries-old trees and all native animals in the Jarrah Forest of Western Australia. As the most biodiverse temperate forest on earth it is home to 800 plant species and 10 endangered animal species. Over 280 km² have been cleared by Alcoa, impacting 910 km² of forest – an area visible from space to create the world’s third largest mine and largest in any Biodiversity Hotspot. Despite 60 years of operation and research by Alcoa, no rehabilitated areas have been accepted back by the Government of WA as ‘restored’. Plant species important for forest function are on average five-times less common, if present at all, in ‘rehabilitated’ areas with replanted Jarrah trees struggling to grow naturally. Five major plant families are missing or at alarmingly low levels, weeds are 25 times more common, with four measured key forest ecosystem health indicators shown to be failing. Rare Black Cockatoos and many native mammals that depend upon old growth ecosystems show limited or no evidence of return.”

Concerns about the Jarrah forest are not new. The statement includes an extract from Western Australia’s EPA Technical Bulletin 44; 1978 which says: “The natural ecosystems of the Darling Range, adapted as they are to a most unusual and harsh environment have a scientific interest and constitute an irreplaceable genetic resource of great value, which is not calculable in purely economic terms.”

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Further reading:

[Recent news stories regarding mining in the Jarrah Forests](#)

[Research report on bauxite mining in the Jarrah Forests](#) published by WAFA, TWS and CCWA

Background

Many important community groups are currently working to stop mining expansions in the Jarrah forests, these include The Leeuwin Group and the WA Forest Alliance.

The End Forest Mining Campaign is an alliance of 9 environment groups: The WA Forest Alliance; The Wilderness Society; The Conservation Council of WA; Jarrahdale Forest Protectors; Dwellingup Discovery Forest Defenders; Nature Reserves Preservation Group; Peel Environmental Protection Alliance; Doctors for the Environment Australia and Australian Conservation Foundation Perth Community Group.

WA Forest Alliance (WAFA) WAFA was established in 1990 and represents member groups and supporters in an ongoing community campaign to deliver strategic and effective advocacy for the protection of WA's South-West forests. WAFA's mission is to see WA's native forests fully and securely protected and managed to maintain and restore their ecological values. For more information see www.wafa.org.au

The Leeuwin Group The Leeuwin Group is an independent group of concerned scientists who are committed to the conservation and protection of Western Australia's biodiversity and natural environment. The group's website includes maps showing how much Jarrah forest has been removed. It features a document titled, Defining and Creating New Protected Areas in the South West Forests Beyond 2024.

Members are: Emeritus Professor John Bailey, Emeritus Professor Don Bradshaw, Professor Kingsley Dixon, Professor John Dodson, Professor Richard Hobbs, Professor Stephen D. Hopper AC, Professor Hans Lambers, Professor Malcolm McCulloch, Professor Robyn Owens, Dr Graeme Pearman, Professor Fiona Stanley AC, Professor Stephen van Leeuwen and Dr Joanna Young. For more information see www.TheLeeuwinGroup.org.au

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