



Environment groups slam Minister Plibersek for approving “reckless” South32 bauxite mine expansions

12 February 2024

Federal Environment Minister, [Tanya Plibersek has approved a proposal by South32](#) that would see thousands of hectares of WA’s Jarrah forest, found nowhere else on Earth, destroyed for bauxite mining.

The decision gives the green light to the clearing of 4,500ha of threatened species habitat, the same size as Minister Plibersek’s electorate of Sydney. Conservation groups are slamming Minister Plibersek for this decision as it goes against the Albanese Labor Government’s commitments to end extinctions, impacting endangered species such as black cockatoo nesting sites, and critical habitat for Woylies and Numbats.

Minister Plibersek had the power to reject the proposal or impose stricter conditions once it landed on her desk with conditional approval from WA’s Environment Minister Reece Whitby at the end of 2024, after an assessment from WA’s EPA.

The state environmental watchdog’s assessment raised concerns about the adequacy of the company’s information and management plans. It also stated that the Northern Jarrah Forests are not likely to be able to be rehabilitated, which is reinforced by recent scientific studies.

Jenita Enevoldsen, The Wilderness Society says, “the ALP’s Nature positive vision was to end extinctions. This approval flies in the face of that plan, which gives permission to bulldoze thousands of football fields of threatened species habitat, critical to the survival of species like Karrak / red-tailed black cockatoo, the numbat and woylie.

“The Minister has not listened to the community over corporations. She has not applied the Global Biodiversity Framework or Glasgow Leaders Declaration to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030 and end extinctions when assessing this project. The approval of this project threatens the Northern Jarrah Forests and its biodiversity, climate, culture, water and future generations.

“The Minister has shown that nature is not a priority to this government, and they’re failing to do their job and protect nature.

Jason Fowler, WA Forest Alliance’s Senior Campaigner says “The Minister’s decision means a further 4500ha of critical habitat in the Northern Jarrah Forests will be bulldozed and burnt. Threatened species will take a triple hit - from climate impacts,

from clearing, and a failed rehabilitation program.

“South32’s Worsley operation is WA’s fourth highest greenhouse gas emitter, releasing a further 51 million tonnes of GHGs by 2050 puts the Northern Jarrah Forest at serious risk of ecosystem collapse.

“Rehabilitation does not and cannot restore the Jarrah forest after bauxite mining. We need to mitigate all threats to these forests and threatened species and stop relying on false solutions that just don’t work.”

“Collectively the End Forest Mining alliance sent over 18,000 community letters to Minister Plibersek, calling on her to do her job, and reject deforestation of the irreplaceable Jarrah forests. While this decision is disappointing, the community alliance is determined to limit bauxite-mining deforestation across the Northern Jarrah Forest.

To access images & video of South32s Boddington bauxite mine see [here](#), and

To access images & video of threatened species, local community protests and drone footage of rehabilitation see [here](#).

For further details please contact

Jason Fowler | Senior Campaigner WA Forest Alliance | 0487806385 |
jason.fowler@wafa.org.au

Jenita Enevoldsen | Senior Campaigner The Wilderness Society | 0405 941 500

jenita.enevoldsen@wilderness.org.au