

# Media Release



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## Locking up more NSW forests won't help koalas

The peak industry groups representing NSW's timber and forest products industries slammed the NSW Government's announcement today to lock up more State Forest, with no evidence that it will lead to better conservation outcomes for koalas and without consulting with industry.

Timber NSW and the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) said that while Australia's forest industries are committed to koala conservation, we need evidence-based decisions that recognise the vital role that our production forests play in the sustainable management of our forests, including the forest industries' considerable investment in conservation, bushfire mitigation and recreational amenities.

Timber NSW and AFPA are also demanding answers on how today's announcement will impact on future wood supply for the industry, and what the Premier means when she says that the 24,538 hectares are [just a starting point](#).

Timber NSW General Manager, Ms Maree McCaskill, said today's announcement undermined the work of the NSW Forest Industries Taskforce and the [NSW Forestry Industry Roadmap](#), which promised a more consultative, evidence-based approach to forest policy. The Taskforce has not been convened for almost 6 months (the last meeting was on 24 November 2017).

"With 90 per cent of NSW's forests in National Parks and Reserves (80 per cent, or almost 6 million hectares) or in State Forest Reserves and protected areas (10 per cent, or about 1 million hectares), and just 1-3% per cent selectively harvested each year and then regenerated as required by law, we should be demanding to know why our extensive reserves system is failing," Ms McCaskill said.

"The NSW Government continues to ignore the single biggest message from industry that we cannot sustain any further reduction in production forest. Above all else we need resource security and policy stability to drive the investment decisions that will allow our industry to innovate and grow," Ms McCaskill concluded.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer, Mr Ross Hampton, said NSW's State Forests provide a sustainable resource that not only supports thousands of jobs directly and tens of thousands more in downstream industries, but also generates beautiful appearance grade timbers that Australians love.

"Australia has an annual trade deficit of more than \$2 billion in wood products because domestic demand continually outstrips supply," Mr Hampton said.

"The NSW Government must recognise that any reduction in Australia's world class forest industry will increase imports of hardwood timber from countries with weaker environmental regulations, including those where tropical rainforests are logged unsustainably and illegally," Mr Hampton concluded.

AFPA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber and paper products.

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