

Notes from the 2025 Members' Forum Incorporating Q&A with Members

Wednesday, 24 September 2025

Hosted by Karl Tischler (Board Convenor)

Campaigns update presented by Amelia Young (National Campaigns Director)

Forest and Land Clearing Updates

- **Tasmanian Forests:** The **Rockliff government backflipped** on its announcement to log **39,000 hectares** of forests nominated as a 'wood bank'. Legal action was successfully taken regarding the proposed logging of **Mt Tongabatu**, setting an important precedent in Lutruwita/Tasmania that plans for logging must be prepared to avoid being unlawful.
- **Northern Jarrah Forests (WA):** There is an expansion of **bauxite mining** in these forests.
- **Queensland Forests:** Work is underway with supermarkets like **Woolworths and Coles** regarding the conversion of forests to **pasture for beef production**.
- **New National Parks Proposed:** creating a movement for new national parks, including the **Emerald Link** and **Great Forest National Park**, with TWS backing the leadership in this space.
- **Great Koala National Park (NSW):** The NSW Government delivered on a commitment to establish the park despite significant opposition. This is seen as a win that delivers protections for myriad creatures and secures globally significant, unique forests. **Traditional Owners** were instrumental in bringing about this change.
- **Victorian Forests Win:** A reminder of a past win, where the Victorian government decided to end native forest logging in 2024.

Legal and Campaign Action

- **Duties Court Case Win:** The organisation **won proceedings against the Environment Minister** concerning protected species.
 - The court case was launched because the Minister had not prepared **recovery plans** for the more than **2,000 listed protected species**.
 - The case has been settled, resulting in some plans being delivered and a **timetable for more**.

- The government's position on the **expiry of plans** (sunset clauses) has also been **reversed**.
 - The next step is to secure **funding** to ensure the success of these recovery plans, and to urgently raise the plight of other species directly with the Minister, following the **11 carefully selected species** taken to court.
 - **NOPSEMA Case:** This is part of the wider fossil fuel campaign work, focusing on the issue of companies **not properly decommissioning old oil rigs** and lacking **financial assurance** for this process.
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Drivers of Deforestation and Corporate Accountability



- **Beef Production Drivers:**
 - Deforestation is driven by **export markets in Asia and the US**, even though domestic consumption is not increasing.
 - **Large holdings and agribusiness** (a minority of agriculturalists) are responsible for most of the clearing.
 - A key next step is to **engage the banks** financing this clearing.
 - **Corporate Australia and Supermarkets (Beef):**
 - TWS is investigating if (and why) supermarkets are backtracking on commitments regarding beef.
 - **Woolworths has reportedly backtracked**, while **Coles has a solid commitment**.
 - **Pallets made from native forests** are also being used, requiring vigilance.
 - Campaigning involves a combination of **inside track** (advocacy) and **outside track** (public pressure). Reaching out to supermarket managers is impactful.
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Tools and Campaign Strategy

- **Watch On Nature:** A citizen science tool that enables the real-time **scrutiny of clearing on the ground**.
 - It helps **document and expose** the severity and scale of deforestation, which increases public concern.
 - It is used for **documenting breaches** of environment law and reporting unapproved clearing, including exposure in the media.
- **Pathways to Deforestation Change:**
 - Past campaigns, such as the **Otways campaign** against forests being felled for **toilet paper** (Kleenex boycott), have created space for systemic change.

- The impact of **Bunnings walking away from using native forest in Victoria** was a significant factor in the government's decision to end native logging years earlier than expected.
 - **Long-Term Commitment:** The importance of **vigilance and persistence** over years for campaign success was emphasised
 - With massive thanks to TWS Members and supporters
 - Highlighting that 2026 brings the Wilderness Society's **50th anniversary - something to celebrate!**
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Wilderness Nominations

- Current important work includes securing **World Heritage Area (WHA) nominations** for the **Great Australian Bight (GAB)** and the **Nullarbor**.
 - The organisation is also investigating options to support the **Traditional Owner-led WHA nomination process for Cape York**.
 - Work is being done regarding the integrity of wilderness areas, specifically:
 - **Lake Malbena (Lutruwita/Tasmania)**.
 - Preventing **three new coal mines** from being established in the **Wollemi WHA** (advocacy with Traditional Owners) in NSW.
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