



The Honourable David Kelly MLA
Minister for Water; Forestry; Innovation and ICT; Science; Youth
8th Floor
Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

10 March 2020

Re: Protecting South West Forests

Dear Minister Kelly,

I am writing to thank you for your recent decision to place a freeze on the logging of two-tier karri forests in the South West. This is a great step in the right direction for the protection of WA's unique forest ecosystems.

As you may recall from my previous correspondence on this issue, the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Western Australia holds great concern for the health of creation and views the protection of the natural environment as a chief task of God's call to the reconciliation of all things.

The Synod is particularly concerned about the growing impacts on the forests of the South West and the vulnerable and rare endemic species which they contain. The freeze you have announced on the logging of two-tier karri forests is an important step towards greater protections for these areas.

We hope that further steps like this will be taken to greatly increase forest protections as part of a broader transition away from native forest logging. We encourage you to consider making this temporary, one-year ban into permanent protection of two-tier karri forest as the next step on a pathway towards a plantation-only timber industry.

It is the view of the Synod that, given the uniqueness of the South-West forest ecosystems and the habitat the forests provide for numerous threatened species endemic to the region, as well as their carbon storage potential, all high conservation value forests need to be protected from logging and clearing activities by classifying them as national parks.

As we have previously said, a key social justice concern embedded in our request is for the local workers, families and communities who are currently reliant on native forest logging. Any move to protect native forests must ensure that workers and local communities connected to the native forestry industry are included in the design and implementation of a fair transition plan towards other secure local employment.

Can you please advise us on the next step in your plan to transition away from native forest logging?

Yours faithfully,

Rev Steve Francis
Moderator
Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Western Australia

