

Barking up wrong tree on forests

In response to Paul Murray's pro-logging essay (*Opinion*, 18/6).

Simply stating an industry is sustainable over and over again doesn't make it so.

Referencing those who benefit most from untruths you hold dear only lowers the credibility bar.

I'm guessing that Murray, along with the industry talking heads he quotes and those he claims to be speaking for, knows little about the 800-plus plant species that exist in a jarrah forest; nor anything about the relationship they share with each other and the largely unknown bacterial, fungi and insect world critical to forest health.

Although the human-centred approach that Murray takes on forest "management" in his latest myth-perpetuating article, is one that I share, I sense we depart ways early on how that approach is best served.

Forests predate humans by hundreds of millions of years and amongst many other things helped create and maintain the chemical composition of the atmosphere essential to all life. As such my approach, inclines me to obsess more about the



Logging in WA. Picture: Jane Hammond/Cry of the Forests

vandalism logging has inflicted on our native forests than worry about what Murray calls the economic vandalism caused by ending this unsustainable loss-making industry.

But don't take my word for it, please read the latest Independent Silviculture Review Panel Report initiated by the Department of Biodiversity, Culture and Attractions (May 2022) for insights into past management practices, forest health and how credible sustainability claims are. It all points to Murray barking up the wrong tree.

Ray Swarts, Margaret River

Logging ban ill-advised

Paul Murray's article (18/6) draws attention to the many flow-on effects of the McGowan Government's decision to cease timber harvesting in native forests.

These adverse consequences were clearly foreseeable had the Government bothered to undertake a proper assessment of the social, economic and environmental consequences of its decision or to consult with affected communities and industries.

Forest management requires detailed planning over long time horizons. The current situation facing industries and communities reliant on native timbers demonstrates yet again the folly of basing decisions on short-term political considerations.

The WA economy is heavily reliant on revenue from mining and energy resources, and for the Government to be working against the interests of local industries that utilise sustainable natural resources from our forests seems ill-advised.

Rather than spend \$80 million of taxpayers' funds to close down a sustainable industry, these funds would be better spent improving services to the community and addressing genuine issues that threaten our State's environment and biodiversity.

**Dr Lachlan McCaw, vice-president
Forestry Australia, Margaret River**

Full name and address (not postal) and, if applicable, WA Newspapers, PO Box 1959 Osborne Park DC WA (include full address and telephone number). For legal issues, space or clarity.

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