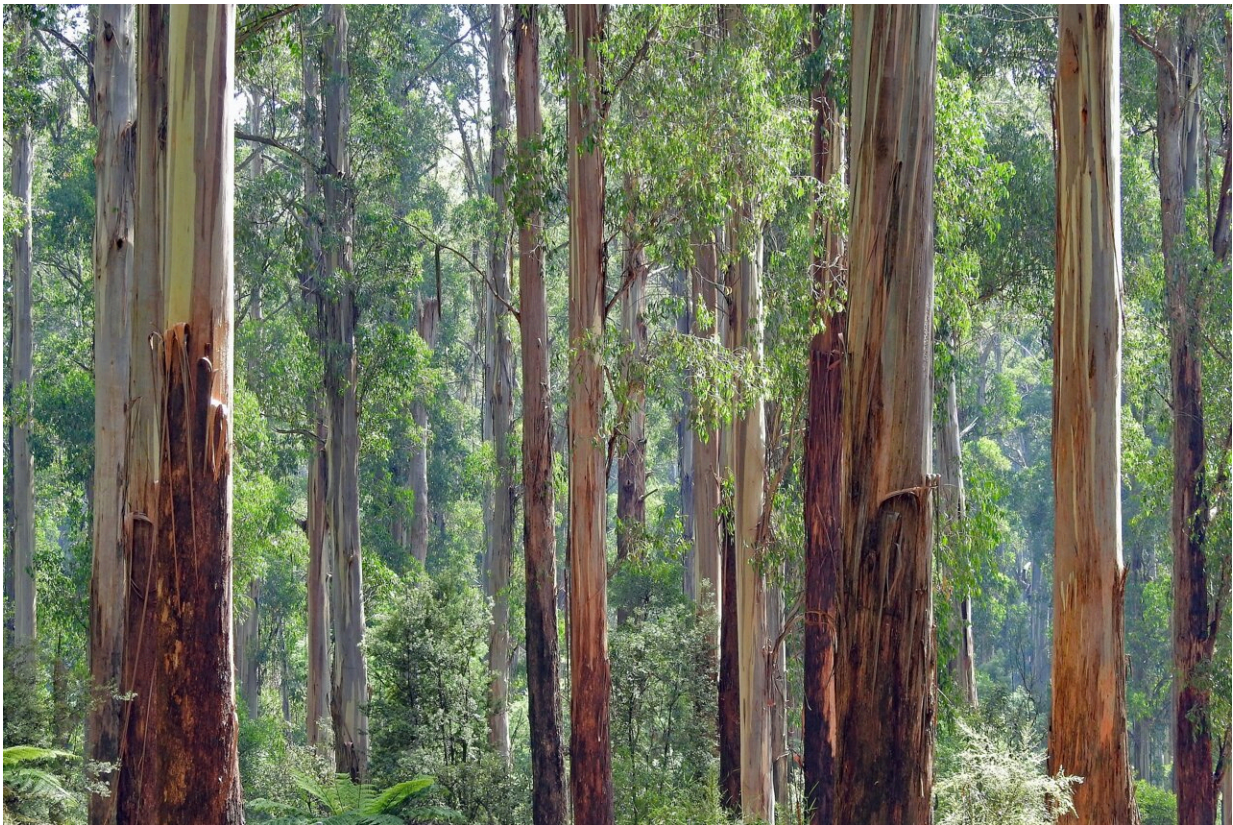


Stopping native forest logging key to getting to net zero in Australia

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Eucalyptus forest, Australia. Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Leading researchers are calling for a cease to native forest logging if Australia wants to meet its net zero targets in coming decades.

The researchers, from The Australian National University (ANU) and Griffith University, say only native forests can remove carbon from the atmosphere at the rapid rate required.

The Federal Government has legislated a 43% reduction in [greenhouse gas emissions](#) from 2005 levels by the year 2030.

Professor Brendan Mackey from Griffith University said carbon emissions need to be reduced by around 15.3 megatons each year for the next nine years if the government's target is to be met.

"This is about the same as the annual net carbon emissions generated by [logging](#) our native forests," Professor Mackey said.

"Protecting and restoring native forests is a critical mitigation action if Australia is to meet its net zero emissions targets."

Each year around 2% of Australia's native forests are logged. The other 98% of forests are growing and provide a powerful mitigation through the natural removal of atmospheric carbon.

Some of Australia's forest types are among the [most carbon-dense](#) in the world.

Data shows ceasing logging in native forests in Tasmania would have an estimated equivalent emissions saving of taking 1.1 million cars off the road every year.

Another [recent study](#) found Tasmania delivered negative carbon emissions due to a large and rapid drop in native forest logging.

Professor David Lindenmayer from ANU said reducing native forest logging would not only be good for [emissions reductions](#) but also help

reduce the risk of "catastrophic bushfires."

"Stopping native forest logging is essential to decreasing fire risk," Professor Lindenmayer said.

"Forests are more flammable for up to 70 years after they are logged and regenerated, with the increased fire risk adding further to [carbon emissions](#).

"Stopping logging in our native forests will help address elevated fire severity problems created by logging which greatly endanger people's lives and property."

Dr. Heather Keith from Griffith University said there were also clear economic gains from ending native forest logging, including a wide range of ecosystem services.

"The [economic value of native forests](#) for carbon storage is greater than the value of forests for woodchips and paper production," Dr. Keith said.

"Switching to a long-term carbon storage role for [native forests](#) will still require a major skilled workforce in rural and regional Australia. This workforce will be needed to manage carbon stocks, including regular measurements to quantify change in [carbon storage](#) levels over time.

"Failure to properly protect forests makes no environmental sense nor any economic sense in a carbon-constrained world where dealing with climate change is a must."

Provided by Australian National University

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