

Support the Guardian

Fund independent journalism with \$20 per month

Support us →



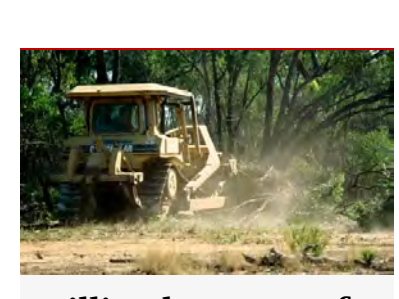
Environment Climate crisis Energy **Wildlife** Biodiversity Oceans Pollution Great Barrier Reef

Logging and land-clearing

Lisa Cox

Fri 26 Jun 2020 04:02 AEST

Share



Million hectares of threatened species' habitat cleared without assessments

Read more

Share

Read more



Ending logging in Victoria now would save taxpayers \$192m, budget office estimates

Read more

Share

Read more

This article is more than 4 years old

Environment groups urge Nippon Paper to scrap Victorian timber from supply chain

In a letter to the Japanese company, activists call for rapid transition to products sourced from plantations and recycled fibre



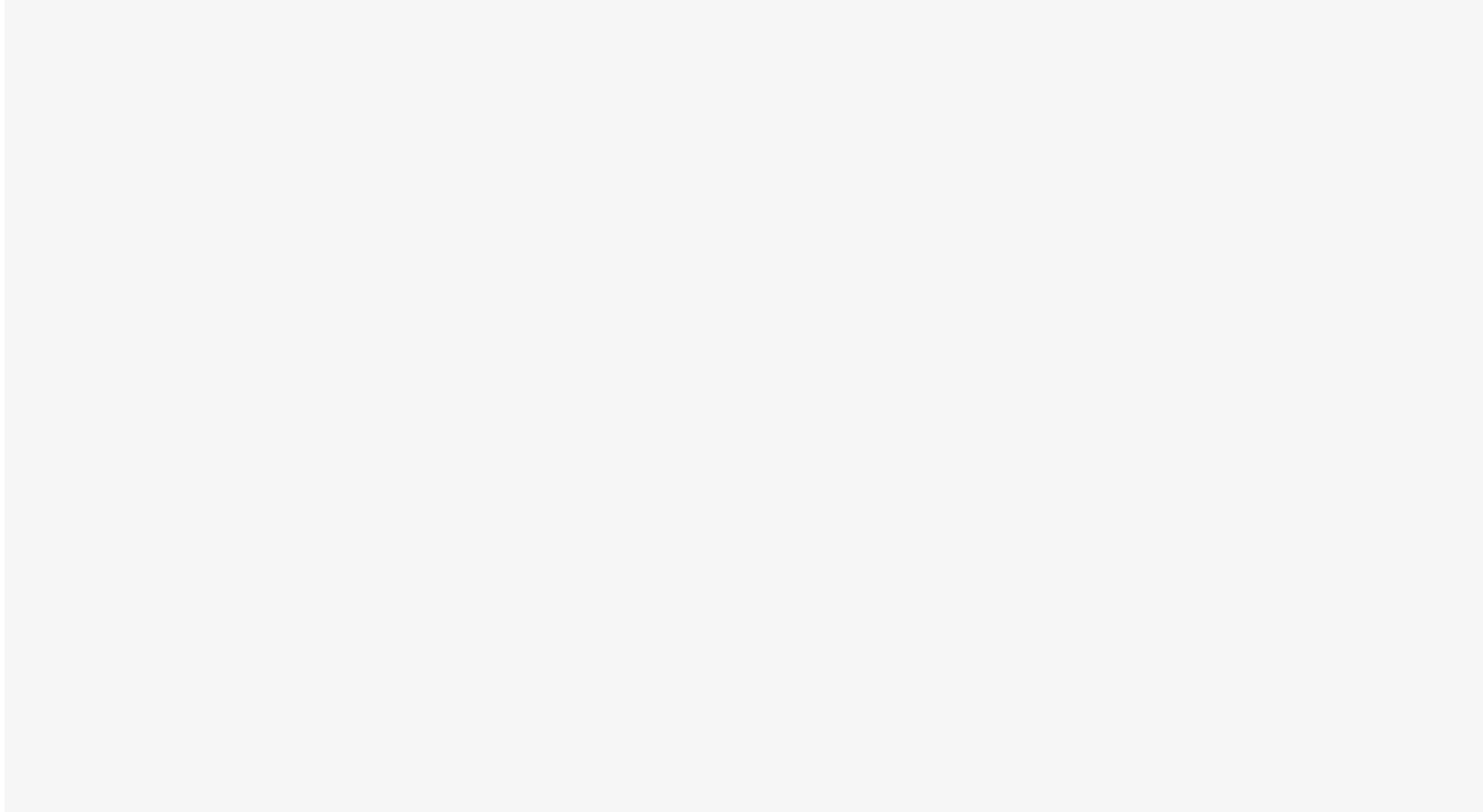
Environment groups say Victorian forests where logging was focused on supplying Nippon Paper Group need to be allowed to recover from the bushfires. Photograph: SOPA Images/LightRocket/Getty Images

More than 40 environment groups have called on Japan's Nippon Paper Group to remove timber logged in Victoria's native forests from its supply chain in the aftermath of bushfires and a landmark judgment that found a government forestry agency repeatedly breached conservation regulations.

It comes as a **legal injunction halted VicForests's operations** in a further 14 coupes in the state's central highlands and amid growing pressure for a statutory review of Australia's national environment laws to **reconsider the industry-wide exemption for logging**.

Nippon Paper Group is the owner of the Opal Australian Paper mill in Maryvale, Victoria.

In a letter to the company, 41 environment groups, including the San Francisco-based Rainforest Action Network, The Wilderness Society and Friends of Leadbeater's Possum, detailed their concerns about the company's supply chain and called for a rapid transition to products sourced from plantations and recycled fibre.



They stressed the bushfire disaster exacerbated loss of habitat for endangered species already being threatened by native forest logging that Nippon Paper Group "has a direct stake in".

"Due to the unprecedented and catastrophic fires, native flora and fauna, and forest ecosystems are under immense stress, and many animals have been pushed closer to extinction as a result of the fires," the letter said.

"Post the 2019-20 bushfires, there is growing support for the protection of Australia's native forests from logging."

The groups said in Victoria, where logging was focused on supplying Nippon Paper Group, more than 200 threatened and rare species had more than 50% of their known habitat burnt in the fires.

"These forests need to be allowed to recover from bushfires, rather than be ground up to supply paper mills," Gemma Tillack, the forest policy director of the Rainforest Action Network, said.

The letter also noted last month's federal court judgment, which **found VicForests had breached the code of practice in its regional forestry agreement**, a bilateral agreement between the state and federal governments.

As a result of this, the court found logging by VicForests was not exempt from national environment laws and the agency had breached threatened species protections.

The groups alleged the presence of Victorian native timber in Nippon Paper Group's supply chain was a breach of the company's policy to ensure its timber was harvested "in compliance with relevant laws".

"Nippon Paper Group needs to stop supporting illegal practices and driving species extinction in Victoria by severing ties with repeat offenders, VicForests," Pete Cooper, a marketing campaigner for The Wilderness Society, said.

State and federal governments are under increasing pressure over the continued logging of native forests.

Habitat loss is a **driver of extinction** and the resumption of logging in unburnt forest in Victoria and New South Wales before the full effect of the bushfires on threatened species is known has **angered conservationists and some state MPs**.

On Thursday, the NSW government revealed it had **dropped a plan** that could have opened new areas of the state's protected old growth forests to logging.

In Victoria, activists have successfully gained multiple legal injunctions since January that **temporarily halt native forest logging** because of concerns about threatened species, including the greater glider.

The interim report from the review of Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act is due next week.

Guardian Australia has sought comment from Nippon Paper Group.

Explore more on these topics: Logging and land-clearing, Victoria, Trees and forests, Japan, Endangered species, Conservation, Asia Pacific, news

Share Reuse this content

Advertisement for The Guardian app: The Guardian app keeps you on track with our award-winning journalism - reporting that perseveres after the truth and challenges the powerful. Download the Guardian app

- Most viewed: Woman who performed fatal illegal breast augmentation in Sydney to spend at least 30 more months behind bars; UK general election results 2024: live tracker; Trump calls Biden 'broken-down' and claims he quit 2024 race in leaked video; Live: General election 2024: UK awaits exit poll; Theresa May given peerage in surprise dissolution honours list - latest live news; Fatima Payman's decision to quit Labor party will 'empower opponents on far right', Wayne Swan says

Most viewed section with a large grey background area.

Original reporting and incisive analysis, direct from the Guardian every morning. Sign up for our email →

Guardian Australia acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, waters and community. We pay respect by giving voice to social justice, acknowledging our shared history and valuing the cultures of First Nations.

About us, Information, Complaints & corrections, Help, SecureDrop, Work for us, Privacy policy, Terms & conditions, Contact us

All topics, All writers, Events, Digital newspaper archive, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, Newsletters

Guardian Labs, Advertising with us, Cookie policy