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WA Forest Alliance – The Figures Don't Add Up

The WA Forest Alliance (Wafa) is trying to pull a stunt on the people of WA, with the release of economic modelling on farm forestry.

That's according to the state's peak timber industry body, the Forest Industries Federation of WA (FIFWA).

Under the so-called Forests For Life (FFL) plan, Wafa commissioned a financial assessment of farm forestry, to support their goal of shutting down the native forest timber industry.

It's what's missing from the analysis that's most revealing, according to FIFWA Acting CEO, Matt Granger.

"The consultant brief did not include doing the figures on shutting down the native forest timber industry," Mr Granger said.

"We can help Wafa in that regard – it means wiping out a \$220 million annual contribution to the economy, and 500 direct jobs*," Mr Granger said.

"There is no way a financial assessment of farm forestry can square the ledger when the overarching goal is shutting down the sustainable WA native forest industry," he said.

"The timber industry supports farm forestry. This sector needs to grow to sustain the timber industry, and provide benefits for landholders," he said.

"FFL is primarily about shutting down a sustainable industry and locking up state forest into national parks. The benefits claimed by Wafa of such action, including outcomes of recreation, honey production, water quality protection and carbon sinks – are not even valid", Mr Granger said.

"In fact, there are far better outcomes for the community from multiple use state forests. There are less restrictions on honey production, tourism and recreation activities. Forest ecological thinning to improve water yields in catchments, boost forest health, and maximise sequestered carbon (timber), are also positive outcomes of well-managed forests," Mr Granger explained.

*Socio-economic impacts of the forest industry – Western Australia. Schirmer et al. University of Canberra & Econsearch (December 2017)

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About FIFWA

Forest Industries Federation WA (FIFWA) has been representing the interests of the Western Australian timber industry since 1895. The industry is a key driver of economic activity and jobs in Western Australia, contributing \$1.4 billion to the WA economy and creating about 6000 jobs in WA, with more than 90% of those in regional areas. The industry employs careful and comprehensive management policies to ensure WA's forests are sustainably managed. Less than 1% of the total forest area is harvested annually.

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