



MEDIA RELEASE

2 April 2026

Forestry Australia responds to listing of Alpine Ash forests of mainland Australia as Endangered

Forestry Australia acknowledges the Australian Government's decision to list the Alpine Ash forests of mainland Australia as an endangered ecological community under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), effective from 20 March 2026.

Forestry Australia supports the protection and recovery of Alpine Ash forests and recognises the seriousness of the pressures facing these ecosystems, particularly from repeated high-severity bushfire, climate change and other interacting threats.

At the same time, Forestry Australia remains concerned that the listing process has not adequately reflected the full breadth of operational and traditional knowledge and on-ground management experience relevant to these forests.

Forestry Australia provided a detailed submission to the committee last year, with extensive input from leading forest scientists. Yet, there is little evidence of direct, transparent consideration of Forestry Australia's submission, and its central concerns with the listing. Forestry Australia considers that forest scientists and Traditional Owners should have been more meaningfully involved in the process.

The intent of the EPBC Act listing process is to safeguard ecosystems that are genuinely at risk of extinction. Listing such an extensive and predominantly intact ecosystem, most of it located on public land already managed for conservation, represents an unprecedented step in Australia.

The listing will have significant implications for the management of Alpine Ash forests and surrounding landscapes, with the potential for unintended consequences if it constrains active forest management approaches to reduce risk and support forest recovery. Alpine Ash forests are dynamic, disturbance-shaped systems that require thoughtful, evidence-based and practical management if they are to persist into the future.

Forestry Australia President Dr Michelle Freeman said the organisation's concern is not with the need to conserve Alpine Ash forests, but with ensuring the policy response supports the right kinds of action.

"Forestry Australia strongly supports the conservation of Alpine Ash forests. Our concern has been that any listing and associated policy settings must help, rather than hinder, the active and adaptive management these forests need."

"These forests face real risks, particularly from repeated fire and climate change. Responding effectively requires the best available science, genuine engagement with those who manage these landscapes, and a practical pathway for restoration and resilience-building at scale."

Forestry Australia had previously called for fuller engagement with State land management agencies, Traditional Owners and forest scientists with direct expertise in Alpine Ash ecology, silviculture, fire and restoration.

Dr Freeman said those voices remain essential to the success of any recovery effort.

“The future of Alpine Ash forests will not be secured through listing alone. It will depend on whether we enable timely, well-designed management actions such as restoration, seed collection, regeneration support, strategic fuel management, road access, hazardous tree treatment where needed, and long-term monitoring.”

“We must avoid creating settings where necessary management becomes slower, more uncertain or more difficult to implement in practice.”

Forestry Australia is also calling for the listing to be accompanied by clear and workable arrangements and resourcing that support landscape-scale management rather than fragmented, case-by-case regulatory barriers.

“Public land managers, Traditional Owner groups, researchers and communities need clarity about how this listing will operate in practice,” Dr Freeman said.

“We look forward to seeing the governments plans for how the ongoing active management and recovery of these forests for their health and resilience will be resourced and implemented”.

Forestry Australia remains committed to contributing constructively to the next phase of this work and stands ready to support governments with expert input from its members across forest ecology, silviculture, fire management, restoration and policy.

Photo Caption: *Forestry Australia President Dr Michelle Freeman says the Alpine Ash listing must enable, not hinder, the active management these forests need. (Photo Credit: M Ryan / Supplied by Forestry Australia)*

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ABOUT FORESTRY AUSTRALIA

Forestry Australia is an independent not-for-profit professional association of more than 1,100 forest scientists, managers and growers who work in native forests, plantations and provision of environmental services. Its members are committed to the principles of sustainable forest management and applying these principles to generate environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes in all types of forests and land tenures.