

Hon Tanya Plibersek MP

Minister for the Environment and Water

RE: Ludlow Tuart Forest

The Ludlow Tuart Forest Restoration Group (LTFRG) is a community group of 700 members primarily located in the southwest of Western Australia (WA), who are dedicated to preserving the rich environmental, cultural and social heritage of the Ludlow Tuart Forest. Since 2018, our members have planted over 125,000 Tuart trees, saved the heritage listed Ludlow Settlement from ruin, restored several historic buildings and have opened the area to visitors through our visitor centre and the hosting of regular community events. We are seeking your support in assisting to retain and enhance the outstanding values of this region.

The Tuart Forest is of immense environmental value and occurs only in one patch of the world, located on the western extremity of the south-western coastal plain of WA. The Tuart Forest of the Ludlow area is even more unique, being home to the tallest, largest and most southern tuart trees which are a sight to behold. This area also encompasses the Ludlow River, which is connected to the Vasse-Wonnerup Estuary, which has been recognised as a RAMSAR wetland of international importance since 1990.

The Tuart Forest is listed as critically endangered and without a plan to regrow, it will be extinct in 100yrs. Forest management plans have failed in terms of reforestation of Tuarts, and it is our mission to retain this majestic wonder. The Tuart Forest area at Ludlow that is within State Forest could be a shining example of a Tuart Forest restoration, and environmental care. If left, the legacy and beauty of this uniquely Southwest Australian tree will be tragically lost forever. The extent of pre-European Tuart Forest currently remaining uncleared is well below the threshold of retaining 30% or more of the pre-clearing extent of an ecological community to protect Australia's biological diversity as outlined in the National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005 (Commonwealth of Australia 2001). Despite the majority of the remaining Ludlow Tuart Forest being held in reserve as a National Park, there has been a steady decline in ecological condition due to the passive management that often comes with the creation of National Park. Despite this, the LTFRG is committed to being part of arresting this decline that is continuing to diminish the condition, ecological and social value of this special area.

To avoid the complete loss of what is left of this valuable ecosystem, the Ludlow Tuart Forest urgently requires the implementation of restoration and management activities to counter the many environmental threats. Activities such as implementing prescribed fire, fencing, replanting and weed control are urgently needed.

Restoration of the natural values of the Ludlow Tuart Forest are aligned with many Commonwealth commitments to the environment, including:

- Threatened ecological communities and species - Convention on Biodiversity, Global Biodiversity Framework, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- Migratory birds - Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) and the Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), and through the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership.
- Wetlands - RAMSAR

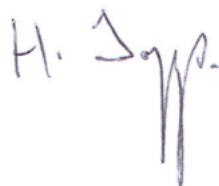
The Tuart Forest is also of immense cultural value to the local Wadandi Noongar Aboriginal people. The LTFRG is committed to assisting with retention of Aboriginal Traditional knowledge associated with the forest which is crucial to prevent loss of cultural and Traditional practices. These practices will undoubtedly contribute to the restoration of many forest values that are at risk or have been already lost. Work of this nature also aligns with the Commonwealth governments commitments to the Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The Ludlow settlement was also the site of the first forestry school in WA, the first fire tower in WA and was where WA's pine industry was established. The LTFRG currently holds a lease over the 26 remaining buildings at the heritage listed settlement and is committed to seeing the rich history of the role that forestry played in the establishment of Western Australia preserved. Preservation of this history also aligns with the Commonwealth governments commitments under the World Heritage Convention.

As a grass roots community group, we are committed to restoring the health of the Tuart Forest, redeveloping the biodiversity, respecting and growing the cultural value, and creating an eco-tourist hot spot at Ludlow which will act as a window to the forest.

We invite you to visit Ludlow where we can show the importance of this region and further discuss how we can work together to save this unique place and showcase it to the rest of the world. Please let us know when you are available to visit. The community and our volunteers need your help.

Kind regards,



President

Ludlow Tuart Forest Restoration Group