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## **Topic 2. Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values**

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I lived and camped in the Coolangubra state forest in 1990 along with other young people trying and failing to save our native forests from logging.

Now it is 2024. I live in the Illawarra now.

My daughter did her Year 10 work experience at the end of 2022 in applied ecology at UoW, with Dr Katarina Mikac, Associate Professor Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health, School of Earth, Atmospheric and Life Sciences. Dr Mikac is the leading expert on threatened species of the NSW South Coast/Illawarra Region and we are so fortunate to have her here at UoW.

It is common knowledge that greater gliders were almost wiped out during the fires. Over 11,000 hectares of greater glider refugia is currently being logged or is scheduled for logging in the near future. Four examples of this targeting are Tallaganda, Badja, Styx River and Tuggolo State Forests. Community surveys over the last 12 months have found a total of 571 greater gliders and 154 den trees using on-ground spotlighting and thermal drone surveys. These surveys are ongoing, and indicate that there are high densities of greater gliders within these areas.

If the logging continues, these greater gliders will be killed.

Humans have encroached enough, destroyed enough, squeezed out our fellow-mammals enough. The line has to be drawn. You'd be aware that the transition to a plantation-based industry is nearly complete, with around 90% of Australia's timber needs already being met by current plantations.

The remaining 10% can easily be satisfied by stopping the export of unprocessed plantation wood and improving the domestic management of existing plantations.

This is a critical window of opportunity to achieve the conservation outcomes our forests and wildlife so desperately need.