

MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 19, 2026



300+ Experts Urge Federal Minister to Protect Woogaroo Forest, South-East QLD

Global coalition of leading scientists, environmental lawyers, conservation professionals and Traditional Owners unite in landmark appeal ahead of public handover

BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND — As of publication, more than 300 experts from Australia and around the world have signed an Expert Open Letter urging Federal Environment Minister Murray Watt to protect Woogaroo Forest, one of the largest remaining areas of remnant bushland in the Ipswich–Springfield region and an important refuge for threatened wildlife.

The 300+ expert signatories – representing 11 countries, 40+ universities and 90+ conservation, wildlife, scientific and community organisations – include:

- Former Commonwealth Environment Minister Robert Hill AC,
- Former Western Australia Premier Professor Carmen Lawrence AO,
- Fellows of major scientific academies,
- Chief scientists,
- Leading conservation biologists,
- Environmental law experts,
- Medical professionals,
- Indigenous leaders,
- Wildlife researchers, and
- Representatives from conservation organisations across Australia and internationally.

Together, they are calling on the Minister to refuse development proposals that would clear or detrimentally fragment the forest and to prioritise the long-term protection of a significant remaining habitat network within South-East Queensland.

The Expert Open Letter highlights concerns about the cumulative impacts of habitat loss across the region and warns that further clearing of Woogaroo Forest would contribute to the decline and eventual local extinction of threatened species including the **endangered koala**, **vulnerable grey-headed flying-fox**, **critically endangered Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia**, in addition to valuable foraging habitat for **critically endangered** species such as the *regent honeyeater* and *swift parrot*.

The letter, together with a community petition signed by more than 21,500 people, will be formally presented to Minister Watt during a community gathering and handover event in Brisbane on 12 noon, Tuesday, 23 June 2026.

Save Woogaroo Forest Group Inc. President Keith McCosh said the breadth of expert support reflected growing concern about the future of the forest and the increasing removal of habitat across the region and state.

"When more than 300 experts from Australia and around the world come together to speak with one voice, decision-makers should pay attention," Mr. McCosh said.

"This is not simply a local community issue. Experts from a wide range of disciplines are recognising the significance of Woogaroo Forest and the consequences of losing one of the region's last large, connected bushland areas."

"The message is clear: once this habitat is gone, it cannot simply be recreated elsewhere."

International signatories say the decision carries global weight. Professor Carlos Afonso Nobre – an Earth system scientist and meteorologist, co-chair of the Science Panel for the Amazon and creator of the Amazonia 4.0 project, and a member of the US National Academy of Sciences and the UK's Royal Society – said:

"Australia is being asked to do what every nation is, from the Amazon to the Congo: protect what mature native forest remains. Woogaroo is one of those decisions, and the world is watching how it is made."

The handover event will bring together community members, supporters and expert representatives to deliver the letter directly to the Minister's office.

EVENT DETAILS

What:	"Voices for Woogaroo" - Expert Open Letter and Community Petition Handover
When:	Tuesday 23 June 2026, 12:00pm
Where:	Meet at Alice Street entrance, Brisbane City Botanic Gardens
Destination:	Office of Federal Environment Minister, Murray Watt

Confirmed for interview at the event:

- Dr Christina Zdenek
- Representatives of Save Woogaroo Forest Group Inc.

Available for comment (not in attendance):

- Professor Hugh Possingham
- Experts and Professors of Law and Ecology,
- Professor Rob Heinsohn,
- Expert on endangered swift parrots and regent honeyeaters.
- Fenner School of Environment and Society Australian National University
- Dr Monica Taylor,
- School of Law, Queensland University of Technology

among the letter's signatories

MEDIA CONTACT

Media wishing to arrange interviews, either at the event or pre/post event, should contact:

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