

Letter to Bega Valley Shire Council: **Wood Pellet plant , 5050 by 2020 and related issues.**

Dear Councillor,

The proposal by South East Fibre Exports to build a wood pellet plant at Eden is a serious matter. It seems beyond the scope of local government to be granting approval, OR NOT, for this facility, as it is an issue that will profoundly influence the impact that this shire has in regards to carbon emissions and climate change. As part of this council, you voted to support the 5050 by 2020 initiatives of the Clean Energy for Eternity campaign, and yet in recent times voted in support of the woodchipping industry in this shire.

I question the impartiality of Council on making a decision regards the wood pellet plant, when it is clearly an extension of the woodchipping industry, to which you have given support in principle.??

I assume that some councillors do not understand the impacts that woodchipping of our native forests has on our carbon footprint and that the broader implications of decisions taken by council also impact on the economy and spirit of our community.

The latest science shows that halting logging of native forests is THE best way to immediately reduce our emissions. Coupled with this , forest and ecosystem protection is VITAL for protection of our catchments, and water supplies as well as for the myriad species that live within.

Tourism in the shire and throughout the nation also focuses on these last "wild" places of the natural world, and here in the Bega Valley we have the beginnings of what is a growing tourism economy based on our beautiful natural environment. Tourism also employs a large number of people in the shire, with the flow on benefits reaching many other businesses and local industries. The money also stays in the local economy rather than going offshore through the multi national enterprise purse.

The wood pellet plant proposal is NOT going to use "waste" material, just as woodchipping does not use "waste". It is yet another industry that relies on the continued destruction of our unique hardwood forests for what is a low value product.

I trust that you will consider your 5050 by 2020 pledge when you vote on this matter, as well as the ethics of the decision you make, despite Peter Mitchell's assertion that this is not a moral issue!

The "eco-nazis" that he so rudely referred to, are in fact, citizens of our community, whose interests you, as councillors are there to represent.

I hope that I find representation for these important values expressed by council in its decision making.

Sincerely,

Skye Etherington
May 2011