

Letter to Editor: Forestry crisis or opportunity? Prue Acton, 5th June 2010

History tells us those civilizations that clear and degrade forests die.

Australia is still logging her forests.

For what? 5% from this "free resource" are saw logs, used for pallets, garden stakes and a small number for appearance grade timber. The states subsidize this industrial scale logging, selling 80-90% as called "waste" for woodchips, whilst undercutting the oversupply of plantation blue gums from federal tax subsidies (MIS).

Now there is a Forestry "crisis". Changing markets see demand for native forest chips declining; Gunns is in deep trouble and the Eden chip mill is down 20%.

Under current Kyoto Protocols native forest logging is deemed carbon neutral in developed countries.

No wonder CFMEU boss Michael O'Conner is in Climate Change talks in Bonn. He wants to make sure that CO₂ emissions from logging – around 10% - are not counted as Forestry interests want so called forest "waste" to be burnt for electricity - a new market - made viable because of its inclusion in Mandatory Renewable Energy Targets (MERT).

Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) for native forest wood-fired power would under price true renewables, such as solar and wind and be yet another subsidy on top of subsidies.

The Forestry crisis is a great opportunity to value forests for: climate, water and wildlife - woodchipping and burning for electricity is madness.

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