

Media Release Tuesday 4 May 2010 Mumbulla forest and Bega NSW Australia

SERCA South East Regional Conservation Council

CHIPSTOP

ChipBusters

Mumbulla Koalas - Day 36 of Anti-woodchip Protests in the South East Forests

A group of about 30 conservationists took their concerns about woodchip logging in Mumbulla koala habitat forest today to the nearby town of Bega.

The conservationists are demanding that the Premier intervene to stop the logging and save the last remaining koala population on the far south coast from possible extinction.

The group stopped a fully laden log truck on its way through Bega to the Eden Woodchip Mill and formed a procession around it through the town.

"Our last koalas are incomparably more valuable than a few truckloads of woodchips," said Harriet Swift of south east forests conservation group CHIPSTOP. 'And every load of woodchips is subsidized by taxpayers - what a farce."

Prue Acton of SERCA said "Almost 200 trucks like this one enter the chipmill every day; they have already done so much damage to the forests, waterways and the wildlife already, but to wipe out the last koalas is the final straw."

"We hope the Premier is not politically deaf to our calls for help. She is running out of time to save the koalas and bring State Forests under control," said Noel Plumb of ChipBusters

The protesters escorted the truck through the main street with banners demanding that logging of koala habitat and woodchipping cease. The procession was eventually broken up by police.

Earlier in the morning local community members had blockaded the forest to prevent loggers starting work for the day in Mumbulla forest, as they have done every day since the controversial logging started on 29th March. The protesters delayed felling of the large trees until police broke up the blockade.

For comment:-

Harriett Swift -- CHIPSTOP -- 0414 908 997

Noel Plumb - ChipBusters - 0425 23 83 03

Prue Acton -- SERCA -- 02 6494 5144

Link to video of walk

<http://rcpt.yousendit.com/865044239/70ab57f5818964f4a3e5f153722e07e1>

To see the woodchip logging machines in action, check out:

"World's Best Practice Koala Killing".

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxA6OAgYvCU>

The clip shows how helpless a koala would be against these logging behemoths. The cost of the machines is an estimated \$5 to 6 million.

Protesters have been fighting the highly contentious woodchip logging of Mumbulla forest near Bega since 29 March through a running blockade, direct blockade and legal action. Today is Day 36 of this protest. Conservation groups condemn this logging as illegal and a direct threat to the only known koala population of the south east forests, on the coastal plain between Sydney and the Victorian border.

Forests NSW began the woodchip operation on an inadequate koala survey, which was subsequently proved inadequate. Then they were found to be logging a designated Aboriginal Place, which is illegal. Last week Dr David Milledge, an eminent ecologist, released a report stating the new koala surveys are inadequate. New evidence of very recent koala presence in the logging area has not been acted upon by State Forests or the Department of Environment