

**MEDIA RELEASE: AUSTRALIAN FORESTS NARROWLY ESCAPE
FURNACES. AUSTRALIAN FORESTS AND CLIMATE ALLIANCE. 19.03.2012**

Australia's forests and wildlife had a desperately narrow escape from an increase in destruction today when Parliament voted not to subsidise the burning of native forest wood for electricity. The vote was 72-72, with Speaker Peter Slipper casting the final 'no' vote to Rob Oakeshott's motion.

The Australian Forests and Climate Alliance said it had succeeded, native forest wood burnt for electricity would have received the government's Renewable Energy Certificates. This would have provided a huge financial incentive for a vastly expanded logging of native forests.

"The Greens and independent MP Tony Windsor had pivotal roles in supporting the protection of the Labor government's Clean Energy Bill and ensuring that our native forests will not be burnt as phony "renewable energy", said Prue Acton from AFCA.

Ms Acton said that Oakeshott's back flip on his previous support for excluding native forests as "renewable energy" in the Clean Energy Bill came about after he was lobbied by Douglas Head, a local mill owner and former National Party Electorate Council Chairman.

"Douglas Head, of Kempsey-based Australian Solar Timbers in Oakeshott's electorate, is also a past President of the National Association of Forest Industries lobby group", said Ms Acton.

"The export woodchip industry that has been driving destruction of Australia's native forests for the past 40 years is now faltering so companies like Boral, SEFE and Nippon Paper are desperate for a new perverse market for "waste woodchips" so they can continue to log our public forests" said Ms Acton.

"Oakeshott has been very vocal about the need to "challenge the power of money in politics" yet he seems to have been strongly influenced by the desperate native forest logging industry to support forest furnaces. We are very disappointed with his actions on this", she said.

"Renewable energy credits will now go to genuine clean renewable energy rather than subsidising the clear-felling and burning of our native forests.

Logging is a massive source of carbon pollution. We need to protect our forests, not burn them." concluded Ms Acton.

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