

**Letter to Senators re:
Forestry crisis: opportunity to burn native forests or stop confrontation?
How come the electorate is greener than Labor? Is it vested interests?**

Dear Senator

Australia stands on the cusp of a critical decision – tonight you will be asked to include native forests in the Expanded Renewable Energy Scheme. You will need to decide the economic, social, legal and environmental case for inclusion.

Australia has two options

- Create second market for native forest wood and burn this for power

OR

- Use this golden opportunity to stop industrial scale native forest logging

Economics: there is a “Forestry Crisis” – why?

- Because the market no longer wants native forest woodchips
- Because there is a massive oversupply of plantation blue gums from MIS plus cheap international competition. (See ANU Dr. Judith Ajani)
- The States are subsidizing native forest logging. 80-90% is used for woodchips thus underpricing blue gum plantation wood. Native forests are a “free resource”, i.e., no rates, no resource tax, etc.

Social Licence; below is new poll data reinforcing what the people of Australia have said over decades of polling:

- Nearly 8 out of 10 Australians support a STOP to native forest logging in light of climate change and carbon storage.
- Nearly 9 out of 10 Australians under 35 support a STOP to native forest logging in light of climate change and carbon storage.
- More than 7 out of 10 Australians in regional areas support a STOP to native forest logging in light of climate change and carbon storage

Note: Other declining industries have received structural adjustments when non competitive, non-environmental and no social licence; however massive subsidies have already given to “restructure”.

Legal:

- Definition of “waste” is open to legal challenge
- Chip mills applying for planning approval such as Eden might expect RFAs to be renewed despite diminishing yields and markets for saw logs: the excuse for supplying woodchip logs.
- species loss including essential hollows under international agreements, RFAs not covered under EPBC Act
- community opposition and insurance claims to the changed character of forests, to fire-prone species from short rotation logging.

Environment: scientists and conservationists urge you to exclude native forests from Renewable Energy Credits.

- They are not renewable in any reasonable time frame. (Secretary to the Treasury, Ken Henry) It takes 180 years to replace lost carbon, water and essential biodiversity for resilience against climate variation
- Emissions will be several times more than from dirty brown coal; native forest logging produces 10% of Australia's CO2
- Native forest logging is not carbon neutral as currently counted under Kyoto Protocol;
- Australia has the poorest soils, lowest rainfall and suffers severe droughts and wildfire; conditions cannot be compared to Europe where forests have been logged for millennia and biodiversity has been lost.
- Nippon Paper is the first company to apply for planning through SEFE, the oldest woodchip plant at Eden and any woodchips too fine for paper are currently used for garden mulch, etc., with less than 2% not utilized.
- Developing nations object to our two-faced position, denouncing degradation from logging whilst continuing to degrade ours.
- This source of fuel will compete against true renewables: solar, wind, wave and thermal.
- Forests make rain; pollution from stacks will stop rain drops forming, affecting rainfall over vast areas.
- Forests are more resilient from fire when in tact; see Marysville data on fire prone logged forests. (ANU David Lindemayer)
- In light of climate change, carbon storage in forests is critical; it is not enough to slow fossil fuel use; we must sequester carbon in forests, the best land based store.

Again I urge you to say NO to including native forest wood for burning for electricity and recognize instead the great value of forests for climate, water and the beauty and resilience of diverse and unique species found only in natural forests.

Yours sincerely

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