

“PROTECT WILDLIFE FROM LOGGING” SAY CHIPMILL PROTESTERS

30 June 2009

Killing, starvation, habitat loss and even extinctions of native wildlife from woodchipping will continue unless the independent review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) – released yesterday – leads to significant improvement, according to activists protesting at the Eden chipmill this morning.

Two people have locked themselves to the conveyor belt which has stopped all woodchipping operations at Eden.

They are among environmentalists in three states around Australia today who are protesting about the failure of current legislation to protect wildlife, particularly threatened species from logging.

One of the activists at Eden, Ms Harriett Swift said that the current law is a dismal failure and the review must lead to change.

The Act is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation, but areas under a Regional Forest Agreement are exempted.

“In our own region right now Forests NSW is poised to log the habitat of a population of threatened grey headed flying foxes in South Brooman Forest,” said Lisa Stone, who is also at the Eden chipmill.

“In the coastal forests near Bermagui, logging of koala habitat is set to recommence soon,” Ms Stone said.

She said that EPBC review (p.120) has raised “real doubts about whether positive environmental outcomes are being achieved under RFAs. It agrees with the Senate Committee's finding that “there is a need to improve the transparency and accountability of forestry operations under RFAs and thus better assess the implementation of environmental protection under RFAs, consistent with the objects of the EPBC Act.”

Ms Swift said that the most vulnerable animals in our forests are those which depend on hollows in trees, and with ever shorter logging rotation times, hollows are becoming a thing of the past.

“Over 300 species of mammals, birds and reptiles depend on hollows for shelter and nesting, and their future is simply incompatible with continued intensive woodchipping.”

She said that wildlife in NSW are now facing even greater threats.

“Woodchipping is bad enough, but forest animals in NSW now face an additional threat from shooters, with the NSW Government likely to increase access for shooters into both State Forests and National Parks to prop up its vote in the Upper House,” she said.

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