

Letter to the Editor Eden Magnet, Response to Vince Philips, Harriett Swift, 16.10.10

Mr Vince Phillips of South East Fibre Exports ("Forest Wars," Magnet 14/10/10) distances the chipmill from the recent spate of rule breaking in forestry, saying "the issue was little to do with [SEFE]". "...we don't really have a role to play in making decisions about what happens at logging locations," he says.

One could be forgiven for thinking that SEFE is just a casual customer walking into a big woodchip supermarket and selecting from goods on display, waiting there for a buyer to come along.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Without SEFE, there would be no logging. Every logging operator in the Eden region works under contract to the chipmill.

A representative from the chipmill must sign approval for every "harvest plan", the formal authority to log a forest. Without a SEFE signature on each of those documents, logging could not happen.

Mr Phillips' comment is reminiscent of a meat eater claiming never to have been responsible for the death of an animal, because the animals providing the meat were already dead. Not very convincing.

It is a poor state of affairs when Forests NSW can't observe its own rules, but by drawing attention to this by no means endorses those rules. The logging would still be wrong even if all the rules were strictly followed. We should not dignify these rules by equating "legal" with sustainable, humane, ethical or even economically sensible.

Yours sincerely
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