

SERCA South East Region Conservation Alliance  
ChipBusters  
CHIPSTOP  
NCC Nature Conservation Council of NSW  
EEG Environment East Gippsland  
The Wilderness Society  
Media Release

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NSW Australia

## **Outrageous Woodchip Bid to Burn NSW South East Forests for Electricity Rudd and Keneally Governments Join Woodchippers in Deadly Embrace**

Conservation groups today released a detailed analysis of the outrageous bid to prop up an ailing woodchip industry, based on natural forests, by burning the NSW South East Forests for electricity.

“This has national implications as a number of other woodchippers are lining up to follow Eden and take advantage of the Rudd Government’s deliberate action to class woodchip fired power stations as a sustainable energy source under its Mandatory Renewable Energy Target legislation,” said Noel Plumb of national anti -woodchip group ChipBusters.

“The Eden Woodchip Mill has ransacked the south east forests in NSW and Victoria’s East Gippsland for 40 years for export woodchips for paper pulp. Now, it wants to establish a Woodchip Fired Power Station at Eden. This will create a second, domestic market for the destruction of our forests, it’s outrageous,” said Harriet Swift of Bega based forest conservation group CHIPSTOP.

“Our analysis shows that this appalling proposition can only be done with a further long term commitment of taxpayer subsidies. At present such subsidies amount to some \$15 million dollars a year in NSW and about \$5 million a year in Victoria, “ said Mr Plumb

Over an expected 40 year life for this station, this would amount to some \$800 million dollars of taxpayer money to completely destroy the South East Forests and the other native forests in NSW. It will turn them into vast short rotation de facto plantations devoid of wildlife and sucking up the water resources of places like the Bega Valley on an unprecedented scale.”

“This is “dead koala power” and a dead loss - it's not green, its not clean and it is certainly not renewable. Nor are koalas. Rudd Government Renewable Energy Credits, which are also needed to make this project viable, will be absurd subsidies on top of outrageous NSW subsidies,” said SERCA spokesperson Prue Acton OBE “The biodiversity of the south east is already under severe strain. The latest hotspot is the likely regional extinction of koalas in the South East Forests due to present woodchip operations in Mumbulla SF near Bega.”

“What is the Keneally Government doing even considering this proposal given that its own legislation presently prohibits the burning of native forest wood for electricity? “ asked Noel Plumb of ChipBusters.

“Why have they not immediately put up a STOP sign and really considered restructuring this “bastard of an industry”\*\*, something that Queensland did 10 years ago. The public clearly want a complete transition to genuinely sustainable plantations and genuine clean power generation such as wind and solar. We have 2000 letters from them to prove it.”

The Premier must firmly and immediately reject the bid for a woodchip fired power station in Eden and any similar proposals in the future. This is critical if the NSW government wants to salvage its green credentials before it faces voters at the next elections," concluded Mr Plumb.

\* \*John Button ALP former Federal Minister for Industry

For further comment and copy of our analysis: -

CHIPBUSTERS -- Noel Plumb -- Sydney 0425 23 83 03

SERCA -- Prue Acton OBE - Merimbula – 02 6494 5144, mobile 0419 383 203

CHIPSTOP -- Harriett Swift -- Bega -- 0414 908 997

EEG – Jill Redwood – Goongerah 03 5154 0145

NCC Max Phillips -- 0419 444 916, Jane Garcia -- 0402 757 342

THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY -- Tim Birch – 0428 302 599