

MEDIA RELEASE

New Koala Find In South East Forests Woodchip Battle, 13 April 2010

Conservation groups have again called for the NSW Premier to intervene in the controversial woodchipping now underway in critical koala habitat in the South East Forests. This follows the discovery of evidence of recent koala presence close to the woodchip logging area.

The evidence has been found close to the woodchip operation in Mumbulla State Forest, home to the last known koala colony on the south coast of NSW. The find casts yet more doubt on the future of the reckless woodchipping of the forest.

“We have been asking for the Premier to intervene for weeks and again appeal for her to step in. We have been seeking an urgent meeting with her to save the koalas and talk about the future of all these appalling woodchip operations in our NSW forests”, said Prue Acton OBE, spokeswoman for the South East Regional Conservation Alliance and Noel Plumb for antiwoodchip group ChipBusters

The evidence, a recent scat which appeared to be from a young animal, was found on Saturday 11 April by a qualified biologist only 2 kms from where huge logging machines are currently felling trees and less than 500m from where they will move as woodchip logging progresses.

The scat has been verified as genuine by a koala expert on the staff of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water,” said Harriet Swift of forest conservation group CHIPSTOP who are on the front line of the confrontation with woodchippers in Mumbulla State Forest

The find comes as tensions in the forest escalated yesterday with the police called to the site to move protesters aside.

“This new find shows just how inadequate forestry surveys have been and how risky it is to continue logging in an area that is the stronghold of the last known breeding koalas between Canberra and the Victorian border,” said Ms Swift.

"The community has boiled over with anger and protest at its unheeded calls to protect the forests. Not only is woodchipping going ahead in unbelievably sensitive areas like this koala colony but the NSW Government ,with help from the Australian Federal Government, is about to approve a woodchip burning power station at the Eden Woodchip Mill, redoubling the destruction in the South East Forests," said Noel Plumb of ChipBusters.

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