

MEDIA RELEASE – Monday September 13, Mike Thompson

Last Friday Eden-Monaro's Mike Kelly was appointed as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister responsible for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia-wide, and joins NSW Forestry Minister Steve Whan in seeking a bright future for our South East Region.

On Saturday, more than 150 forest conservationists met at Bateman's Bay and called on the Gillard and NSW Governments to make protection of our State Forests a cost-effective early part of their fight against climate change.

Ian Lowe, president of the ACF delivered the opening address and told the forest forum "The future is not something we are waiting for, it is something we create. The winds of change are blowing both in Canberra and the forestry industry post the Federal election."

Latest news from Tasmania helped fuel this national forest forum. "The official announcement by Gunn's on Friday 10th of September that the giant timber company is withdrawing from native forest logging and wood-chipping is a fundamental change. Gunn's have also announced that they do not want to see native forest 'so-called-waste' burned for energy," said Professor Lowe.

Vanessa Bleyer of Lawyers for Forests relayed her successful case in Melbourne which stopped logging on Brown Mountain in Gippsland. Kirsty Ruddock from the NSW Environment Defenders Office outlined the strong evidence for cases against Forests NSW.

Nippon Paper, owners of the Eden Woodchip Mill received special mention from Dr. Judith Ajani of the Australian National University because of their native forest woodchip operations at Eden and at Maryvale in Victoria.

"Eighty per cent of Australians want an end to native forest logging. The woodchip industry is starting to unravel and the political consensus from both the Liberal and the Labor Parties to support the industry is rapidly eroding," said Prue Acton, spokesperson for the South East Region Conservation Alliance.

SERCA introduced 'Mountains to the Sea' as a new vision for a connected conservation landscape on the South Coast, starting with proposals bridging both Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Shires.

Ian Pulsford, NSW Department of Environment Climate Change and Water presented the Mackey Report 'Connectivity conservation and the Great Eastern Ranges corridor.
See www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/nature/ccandger.pdf

Bruce Leaver, Chair of Sapphire Coast Tourism outlined the three-fold jobs potential for nature-based tourism on Australia's Wilderness Coast.

Philippa Rowland speaking on behalf of Clean Energy for Eternity as panel member on natural forest carbon, commented on the positive mood of the day and of "finding solutions to the age old conflict" including the opportunity for adding value to plantations for the benefit of communities around Bombala and Tumut.

George Browning wrapped-up the forest forum on behalf of a group called Australian Religious Response to Climate Change. Bishop Browning reminded us that, "We all live in one house. This house is the only home we will ever have. Protecting our habitat includes protecting our native forests".

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