

Australia's native forests are at the crossroads

What lies behind the biomass push?

Biomass or biological mass is planned to be fed into electricity generating furnaces or processed into engine fuel.

Australia's native forests could be used to supply these new proposals, taking the place of woodchipping as the driver of forest destruction.

A reprieve for forests?

- Most of our building wood now comes from plantations.
- Our export woodchip industry is in decline.
- Native forest logging rates are at their lowest levels for decades.

Just as forests might be left to recover, the new menace could be logging for electricity, fuels and industrial chemicals; all as conflict-ridden and destructive as woodchipping.

Won't it just use waste?

Biomass electricity won't just use waste or leftovers; it wants trees. Woodchipping has driven decades of forest destruction. Logging native forests for biomass could be much worse.

Won't it save us burning coal?

Burning trees will most likely be in *addition* to burning coal. At best a fraction of a percent of coal could be displaced, but at huge cost to our forests. Burning wood is more polluting per unit of energy than coal. If the government agrees to give biomass burning financial help as a 'renewable', it would instead give incentives to burn forest wood and cause displacement of genuine renewables like solar, wind and geothermal. This is because there are limits on the amount of renewable energy that can earn Renewable Energy Certificates (government subsidies).

Trees grow back so isn't it renewable?

It takes centuries for diverse native forests to properly regrow after logging. A 20 or even 80 year logging rotation is not 'renewable'. The best way to tackle climate change in this critical decade is by reducing our energy use and using true renewable sources like solar, wind and geothermal power.

Won't it make bushfires less severe?

The biomass industry is not interested in taking dead branches and leaves. They only want whole tree trunks - the least flammable part of a forest. Investigations are showing that logged forests burn the most intensely, so in fact logging forests creates greater bushfire risks.

Isn't bio-energy eco-friendly?

Using the term 'bio' does not make this plan environmentally friendly. It will instead be a *bio-massacre*. Once clearfelled, the natural complexity is lost for hundreds of years, denying wildlife habitat, drying out water catchments and making forests more bushfire prone.

Forests are the most stable, long-lived, high density carbon stores we have in the landscape. When logged and burnt massive emissions are released. It takes centuries to recapture the carbon lost as greenhouse gases. Forests also make fresh air, cool the land, filter our water, create clouds and rain and provide habitat for native wildlife.

In this critical decade we must rapidly cut emissions for a safe climate. Forests are the 'lungs of our land', our planet's climate control.

Burning forests is an absurd way to generate 'alternate energy'.

