



Australia's Coastal Wilderness is being Woodchipped

10-June-09

To: **The Chair and Members of Australia's Coastal Wilderness Committee**

From: *Mike Thompson, Forest Sustainability Facilitator & Trainer, Nature.Net Pty Ltd*

Submission: **Responding to your invitation to comment on the Draft ACW Tourism Master Plan**

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute. As an ex-marketing-manager I understand that we seek '**unique and sustainable competitive advantage**' in our Tourism Plans. I know most of your committee to be conservationists, so trust we all understand we have here an urgent responsibility and unique opportunity to save our local natural forests. Over 80% of our *unique* old trees being logged today in this *unique ACW region* are being senselessly woodchipped. One tree logged recently in Gippsland was independently carbon dated as being between 550 and 600 years old. This appalling land management undermines ACW promoting Wilderness, NP & World Biosphere Reserve values. Obviously we must remain apolitical, but ignoring this real issue risks ACW being dismissed as cynical '**Greenwash**'.

Scientists now confirm that the **Carbon Value of Trees** currently being woodchipped far exceeds royalty payments. *Water, Fire and Biodiversity Management* are similar sad stories. Governments do not yet value Ecosystem Services. CSIRO, ANU and others lead the world on Green Carbon science as per www.biodiversitysummit.org.au 8-Aug-09. Another event in Merimbula 1-Aug will expound the link between Natural Forests, Climate Change and S.E. Rainfall. Attached FYI on this subject is a 3-page extract from Hansard and a related Australian Parliament Committee Report.

Photos and Google-Earth convey to tourists worldwide the vast scale of this devastation by our own Governments. **Those 80% of trees fast being virtually-clear-felled in Gippsland and our South-East Forests** are being hastily woodchipped and converted to **slow re-growth** by State Forests because they know their days of logging these old growth trees are numbered. Perversely, *logging* is Forests NSW & VIC's *only source of income* from native forests. Graphs prove re-growth could take a century to recover carbon pollution caused by Forest Logging Plans 2009-2020.

Eden's Woodchip Mill each year regurgitates over one million tonnes of woodchips, most logged from ACW Forests. Today FNSW are busy running tax-payer-funded propaganda bus tours from Eden "*to sell their forest management*". Anybody open minded and keen to be further educated, but opposed to woodchipping, is excluded as a '*Greenie*'. To help promote ACW, your committee could help sponsor '**Tourism & New Green Jobs**' Workshops in each LGA.

Tourists want to **experience Australia's unique natural forests** – including ecosystems being allowed to return to their natural state – even though many coupes will take centuries for their old-growth forest to be fully restored. Like the award-winning Montague Island trips, we can reward tourists by including real contributions to conservation. For example '**Tree Huggers**' will be able to measure the girth of trees and ANU will respond with a Carbon Valuation. '**Koala Spotting**', '**Spot-lighting**' & '**Bird Twitter Tours**' can contribute key data for **Biodiversity Conservation**. Australia's *unique hollows-dependant Threatened birds and possums* all feature. All require trees over 100 years old. '**Wilderness Not Woodchips**'* is a **Forest Tour** being planned for Australian and overseas '**experience seekers**'. ACW Branding and locals can add synergy to the ***Car Stickers**, which will begin populating cars all over our region.

Our beautiful Spotted-Gum '**Bermagui Forest – Gateway to Australia's Wilderness Coast**' is hastily being logged. This outrage is despite letters of protest from *our two Aboriginal-owned National Park Boards* who want to '*reconnect our sacred mountains*' by asserting their right to acquire this State Forest between their **Biamanga & Gullaga NPs**. Bermagui Forest should also protect Koalas, the Bermagui River, and Wallaga Lake as a key part of our Marine Park. **Combined Aboriginal & Natural Heritage Tours** can be a *unique draw-card* - as per our **Joint-NPs & ACW Plans?**

www.Nature.Net.au...*think change. save forests...and promote Australia's Coastal Wilderness!* ABN 24 075 002 185

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