

Address to Council regarding the Nippon Paper Company's Pellet Plant Application, Lois Katz, 07.02.2012

Good afternoon Councilors,

I welcome the opportunity to speak to you today.

I'm speaking today because I believe that the Eden Chip Mill's proposed pellet plant will be used to perpetuate the logging of our native forests and in doing so will be creating more bush fire danger.

The following information was posted by David Lindenmayer, an independent research scientist on the website:

http://www.oren.org.au/issues/fire/research_bushfire_logging.html

'Many studies document how logging alters the structure and species composition of forest (reviewed by Hunter 1999; Lindenmayer & Franklin 2002). Such changes are not only microclimatic conditions...but also can change stocking densities and patterns of trees, into crown spacing, and other forest attributes such as plant species composition. These changes can, in turn, influence fire regimes. (e.g., Ray et al. 2005). For example, logging in some moist forests in south eastern Australia has shifted the vegetation composition toward one more characteristic of drier forests that tend more to be more fire prone (Mueck & Peacock 1992).

The removal of trees by logging creates canopy openings and this in turn alters microclimatic conditions, especially increased drying of understory vegetation and the forest floor (Ray et al. 2005; Miller et al. 2007). As with the influence of forest edges (Harper et al. 2005), microclimate effects (including fuel drying) associated with forest harvesting can be expected to be greatest where the unmodified forest is moist...(Kauffman & Uhl 1991; Holdsworth & Uhl 1997; Malhi et al. 2009).

It is critical to identify and then manage the factors that may exacerbate problems associated with altered fire regimes (Malhi et al.2009). Secondly, climate change is likely to drive substantial changes in fire regimes (Cary 2002; Westerling et al. 2006; Flannigan et al. 2008; Pittock 2009.)

Because of the horrific bush fire experiences of the residents of Victoria and their tragic loss of life and property, we now have a **new** fire danger rating: It is called **catastrophic**. Bush fire intensity has now increased dramatically. Fire fighters said that they had **never** seen anything like it before. This is not a fluke. It is the result of the continued and reckless logging of our native forests.

Approval of the wood pellet plant would perpetuate this ever worsening danger.

Bega Valley Council has a duty of care to the residents of the Bega Valley. Right now many residents of Mogareeka and Tanja are extremely concerned about the proposed logging of

Tanja State Forest. They fear that their lives and property are being put more at risk.

The Parliament of Victoria Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practice on Bushfires in Victoria (June 2008) states: 'Regrowth in State forests after clearfell logging can become a bushfire fire hazard when it is over 10 years old.'

According to the Department of Sustainability and Environment:

"More mature regrowth does burn vigorously as fire danger increases, and there are periods in the forest growth cycle where regrowth is both flammable and susceptible to damage by fire. While in this flammable and vulnerable state, the presence of regrowth makes managing prescribed burning more difficult."

DSE Submissions 168C to Environment and Natural Resources Committee, Parliament of Victoria Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires in Victoria (June 2008).

Wildfire in National Parks and State Forests publication states: "That the cumulative effect of clearfell logging over the past 40 years means extensive areas of State forest have been converted to even age stands of 'mature regrowth' over 10 years old that can 'burn vigorously'. As logging continues, more areas will be converted to this 'flammable and susceptible' state over time."

Wildfire in National Parks and State Forests, November 2009 www.oren.org.au,
www.melbournecatchments.org.au

You are aware, partly because of the great number people who have signed the recent on-line petition that many, many people are against the wood chipping of our native forests. A huge majority of the people who signed this petition, live either in the Bega Valley or in areas that are affected by the logging of native trees that are cut down to service the Eden Chip Mill.

The consequences of the approval of the Nippon Paper Company's application to have a pellet plant approved will go far beyond our valley. People living as far south as Gippsland in Victoria are affected by the Nippon Paper Company's (which trades under the name Australian Paper) determination to keep felling our native carbon storing, water storing and climate moderating forests in order to make paper. This paper should be made from other sources: recycling and plantations.

As polls have told us in the past, about 77% of Australians want the logging of native forests for wood chipping to stop. Every working day between 2,500 and 3,000 native trees are cut down in East Gippsland and the south east of New South Wales to service the Eden Chip Mill. This mill is foreign owned and the profits go over-seas. Silly us to be selling our natural heritage for \$16 a tonne to profit a private foreign owned company.

The market for native forest woodchips is declining, this should be good news for our forests. However, now we are presented with a new dilemma. The Eden Chip Mill has

proposed a new method to use our native forests for profit. The 'waste' from logging our native forests will be used to make wood pellets to be used in heaters made to run exclusively on wood pellets. We need stop creating new industries dependant on the destruction of our native forests.

We all remember the heartbreaking bush fires of Victoria, let us not set ourselves up for the same fate in the Bega Shire.

Please do not approve the Nippon Paper Company's application for a wood pellet plant.

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