

**MEDIA RELEASE: Forestry Meetings are a Done Deal – citizens love for forests spurned.
South East Forest Rescue. 14.02.2018**

Today, auspiciously Valentines Day, the NSW DPI have just held meetings to discuss the regional forest agreements (RFAs) on the South Coast. However, in an email to conservation groups the NSW Government stated that 'RFAs will continue as a critical framework ... and that the RFA regions and objectives will remain the same'. In the meeting, it was stated that the RFAs were to be rolled over regardless.

"This is outrageous," said Mr Scott Daines, spokesperson for South East Forest Rescue. "These meetings are pointless if the outcome has already been decided. This is business as usual for the forestry department."

"The RFAs are a failed experiment," said Mr Daines. "There have only been 4 prosecutions in 20 years on the South Coast. This is despite massive environmental damage, and thousands of breaches of the law. The Forestry Corporation have consistently not met their deadlines, and failed to fulfil their requirements. All of this to put money in the pocket of the Japanese company Nippon, and now ANWE the new owners of the Eden woodchip mill."

The legislation that allows the government to log, the RFA's, exempts the woodchipping and logging groups from every other piece of environmentally protective law, and from citizens taking them to court.

The State owned and run Forestry Corporation NSW have been losing between \$11–\$16 million tax payer dollars every year, but hide it either by merging plantation figures with native forest figures, or using the government subsidies in the income column.

The amount of threatened species has risen dramatically since the RFA's started. Despite being listed on the Commonwealth list, and the NSW list many species are not covered under the RFAs.

'The woodchipping groups are not coming to the table with clean hands,' said Mr Daines. 'Consultation' means to seek information or advice from; or to seek permission or approval from. Consultation requires more than the mere giving of notice, or holding a meeting with a fixed outcome. The essence of consultation is the communication of a genuine invitation, extended with a receptive mind, to citizens - many of whom are experts, to give advice, and the government to be open to accepting the advice."

Yet again this is the fox in the henhouse. Yet again the 'review' process is a sham. It was a sham in 1998 and it's a sham now.

We will not negotiate any longer. Any negotiation has in the past set a precedent for further exploitation. There are some cases where the chance to negotiate equals giving up what you're fighting for...There are going to be some ultimate decisions, but it should be clearly recognised that there are times when you cannot negotiate, because some things in the world are non-negotiable.

- the forestry industry is in denial about its longevity and sustainability.
- the renewal of Regional Forest Agreements across the state must include exit strategies for the industry so the transition for workers is fair and smooth and the

environmental damage caused over the last 20 years by unaccountable logging operations addressed.

- In the Southern & Eden region the continued logging of native forests for woodchip export to Asia for paper-making has always been ridiculous and an environmental disaster.

They'll have to come to a solution fairly soon because the industry recognises it's living on borrowed time, they're having to bring in logs from much further afield, yields are decreasing, and they really need to start looking at measures to manage this in a just way.

If the Govt roll over the RFAs there is every chance the woodchipping & logging groups will say we can't keep supplying these trees they're not regenerating at the rate we thought they were and it will stop and they will just walk away and there will be a huge mess there in real dollar terms for someone else to clean up.

The RFAs should be repealed. The community has called for there to be no more woodchipping and logging of our native forests. Enough is enough.