

Letter in The Age, 17.04.09

We cannot drink woodchips

THE Thomson dam drops lower (The Age, 15/4), catchments have been burnt and still the logging machinery rolls into Victoria's last remaining healthy water catchment to woodchip them for as little as \$8.50 a tonne. Roads for logging machinery are being cut into Cement Creek Catchment, one of the Yarra tributaries and part of Melbourne's water supply.

In the Thomson catchment, about 70 per cent of the area of highest rainfall is being logged, and the dam has reached epic lows: could there be a link? In 2004 the Government commissioned a four-year investigation and found that the best option for improving catchment water yields was to end all logging by 2009. But this option was omitted from the range of choices presented to the Government because it compromised woodchip arrangements with the now Japanese-owned paper giant Australian Paper.

What will it take to end such barbaric management of our water resources? Perhaps only when the last load of logs enters the pulp mill. Then we will know we cannot drink woodchips.

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