

Letter to Editors, Mistrust in Origins of Regional Forestry Agreements. Bronte Somerset. 02.2013

Dear Editor,

Ian McDonald, ex MLC and Minister for Primary Industries, is discredited by allegedly giving mining leases to political colleagues. Can we trust his decisions for other State extraction industries?

Australia has the highest mammalian extinction rate in the world. In south east NSW, flora and fauna are becoming extinct at a higher rate than anywhere else in Australia. Floral and faunal species in SE NSW have become more endangered during the current logging regime. At the start of the forestry agreements, 868 species were threatened; in 2009, 1035 were; and in 2012, 1100 were under threat. In a letter to me, McDonald attests that "Regulations governing the sustainable harvesting of native state forests are designed to ensure the protection of conservation values".

Native forest logging in SE NSW produces 18 million tonnes of greenhouse gases annually. If one tonne of carbon equals the volume of 35 mid-sized cars: the industry is producing a volume of greenhouse gas equal to the mass of 630 million mid-sized cars – if one can possibly imagine that! Per capita of greenhouse gas emissions of world countries, Australia ranked 5th in 2005 and 2012. We stand as no exemplar for climate change mitigation whilst we continue to permit logging of native forests for woodchips.

McDonald further states: "... that wood products consumed in Australia significantly extends the carbon sequestration benefits of forests", yet trees take about 150 years to reach maximum carbon storage. So, trees germinating in 1863 would now be reaching their optimal carbon storage capacity, but we've been logging them for decades. McDonald's petition "to trust his advice" is incredible given his inability to respect the preciousness of the interconnection between forests, soil, water, wildlife, healthy landscapes and waterways, and healthy food sources.

For the health of the planet and Australia's reputation as a greenhouse gas conscious nation, it is time for the Commonwealth Government to intervene and stop the economically and environmentally unsustainable logging for woodchips in SE NSW.

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