

MEDIA RELEASE

Conservationists Challenge Chipmill to Seek FSC Certification Harriett Swift 09.02.10

Conservationists are challenging the Eden chipmill to apply for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification for its woodchips.

The challenge comes against a background of Tasmanian woodchip exporters being pressured to seek FSC certification to meet tougher environmental standards by their customers in Japan.

Spokesperson for the Chipstop campaign, Ms Harriett Swift is daring the chipmill to apply for FSC, as the Tasmanian companies have been forced to do because of market pressure.

“The Tasmanian government has told Forestry Tasmania and Gunns that they need to have FSC if they are to survive in the Japanese market,” Ms Swift said.

“The thing that may protect the Eden chipmill from this market pressure that the Tasmanian woodchip industry is experiencing is the fact that its owner, the Nippon Paper Group is also its biggest customer.

“Nippon is hardly likely to impose an environmental standard that will threaten the viability of a subsidiary that generates several million dollars a year for it.”

“The native forest woodchipping industry in most of Australia currently uses the discredited Australian Forestry Standard (AFS), which is a business-as-usual label devised by John Howard’s one time Forestry Minister, Wilson Tuckey. It is not taken seriously by anyone who cares about conservation,” she said.

Ms Swift said that although conservationists are uneasy about some aspects of the FSC scheme, it is vastly superior to AFS and would be a big step in the right direction.

“To date, it has been difficult for native forest logging to obtain FSC certification in most countries, although we must anticipate it will come under enormous pressure once Forestry Tasmania and Gunns realize how much is at stake for them,” she said.

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