



## **CHIPSTOP campaign against woodchipping the SE forests**

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### **Submission to the Garnaut Climate Change Review**

This submission argues that the imperatives of climate change make it urgent that Australia protects its remaining native forests as among our most vital carbon sinks.

The discussion paper: *Issues Paper 1, Climate Change: Land use – Agriculture and Forestry* does not deal with this issue.

- The native forest and plantation based logging industries are conceptually and practically different and should be treated differently in policy.
- Australia is subsidizing the protection of native forests in South East Asia while continuing to destroy its own forests. In international forums such as the recent Bali conference, Australia will have far greater credibility if it protects its own native forests.
- This submission focuses on the woodchipping industry centred on Eden, NSW.
- Now that Australia has ratified the Kyoto Protocol, there is potential for native forests to be protected as carbon offsets, as permitted under Article 3.4.

### **Native forests are more valuable as carbon sinks than as woodchips**

- Australia's native forests – like others around the world – are among our most precious carbon sinks and it makes no sense to be logging them, especially for such an ephemeral product as woodchips.
- In south eastern New South Wales, the vast majority of trees logged end up as woodchips. In the Eden region, for example, approximately 95% of timber felled is woodchipped. As paper products, these have a life of two to three years. Even manufactured timber products are mostly used for low value, short lived items such as pallets, which usually end up as landfill or are chipped as mulch within a very few years.
- The Eden woodchip mill exports about one million tonnes of woodchips per year, mostly to Japan.  
On the NSW south coast, over 12,000 hectares per year (South Coast, Eden regions) are cleared to supply this wood. In Victoria, approximately 5,500 ha are cleared to supply the Eden chipmill.
- Forest destruction has been estimated to release between 700 to over 1,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent into the atmosphere for every hectare logged, depending on the forest type.
- In addition, trucks delivering loads to the mill travel 14.5 million kilometres per year, generating a further 2 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.  
The electricity used in the chipping process is significant, but not known.

All chips are exported, using additional fossil fuels and generating greenhouse gasses.

- In NSW, the native forest woodchipping industry is subsidised. Revenue received from pulpwood royalties is about \$3.5 million less than the cost to Forests NSW of running its woodchipping operations.
- A similar situation applies in Victoria. Last financial year VicForests returned a \$17,000 loss to Victoria for the logging of native forests.
- Other costs to the community from woodchipping include the loss of water quality and quantity, degradation of topsoils, damage to roads and other infrastructure. In addition, it is impossible to quantify the loss of wildlife and habitat.

In these circumstances, it is reckless and absurd to continue native forest woodchipping, when forests are worth far more as carbon sinks.

### **Recommendations**

- This industry can end with minimal disruption to Australia's balance of payments since Australia has more than enough plantation hardwood available to substitute for all native forest chips produced.
- We submit that it is in the interest of Australian and global efforts to avert climate change that these forests be protected from woodchipping. They are essential carbon sinks and Government policy must recognise this.
- Australia should implement article 3.4 of the Kyoto Protocol.
- We also reject any proposals for alternative, but equally destructive uses of these forests.

Burning native forest wood for power generation is not sustainable and not renewable. Any electricity generated from biomass is only as "green" as its feedstock, and a power generation industry based on burning native forest trees should also be rejected as Government policy.