

**LETTER TO DR M KELLY, MEMBER FOR EDEN-MONARO, HEATHER KENWAY
29.03.2011**

Re Comments regarding Greens not preferencing ALP

Dear Dr Kelly

I heard you on ABC SE radio today blasting the Greens for not preferencing the ALP in the NSW election.

As one of those who used to be what the ALP referred to as “rusted on” voters for the ALP but who voted for the Greens in the NSW election, I would like to suggest that policies not preferences are the real problem. I am not a member of the Greens Party, but I can see it had good reasons not to preference either of the major parties, simply because both have considerable numbers of disaffected Greens-voting ex-supporters.

I know large numbers of people, both traditional ALP and traditional Coalition supporters in the SE region who voted for the Greens in this election and will likely continue to do so as long as the ALP and the Coalition both preference the damaging native forestry industry in the region, ignore the community’s well-demonstrated desire for significant regional promotion of genuinely renewable energy like solar and wind, and steadfastly refuse definitively to rule out industrial generation of electricity from native forest biomass.

Shortly the NSW Government will make a decision on the Eden chipmill’s test case proposal to build a wood-fired power plant, based primarily on native forest “wastes” from woodchipping; and the Bega Valley Shire Council will decide whether the chipmill can build a pilot wood pellet plant that can be geared up to full production if the pilot operations are successful, also initially based primarily on native forest “wastes”. This would open the door to export of the pellets for electricity generation overseas that is not allowed in Australia, and to a new income stream in response to a declining global native forest woodchip market. Central to whether such plants will be built will be the Commonwealth’s determination on the eligibility of the native forest biomass to be fed into those plants to be accredited as a renewable energy fuel and hence entitled to earn Renewable Energy Certificates.

The National Association of Forest Industries has for some years now been actively campaigning for any native forest managed under Commonwealth or State auspices to be accessible for electricity generation. The mid-year vote in the Senate on precisely that was only defeated on the casting vote of the President.

The Greens increased their vote in the Bega electorate to 12.5%. Bega saw the largest swing to the Greens in NSW. Many Greens voters were ex-ALP supporters.

I suggest that it is time for you and your Government to stop abusing the Greens Party and the voters who disagree with key elements of your outdated industry and environmental policies. Abuse won't get us back into the ALP fold. New policies that take better account of twenty-first century environmental and industry circumstances just might.

Yours sincerely
Heather Kenway
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28 March 2011