

"VICFORESTS OPERATIONS CONDEMNED"

To: letters@theage.com.au, 24 Feb 2011

The large proportion of people who want Australia's remaining native forests to be protected must be feeling powerless and extremely let down by governments when they hear about forest breaches and mismanagement ("VicForests operations condemned", Feb. 23). This demonstrates more than ever that a Royal Commission into logging and woodchipping operations in all states that still log native forests is well overdue.

Many people are aware that 95% of what goes into the Eden chipmill are whole logs - not waste but whole logs, sourced from both NSW and Victoria - so it is hardly surprising that the number of sawlogs available to sawmills in East Gippsland is diminishing.

It is greatly concerning to hear that harvested forests are not regenerating, but even if they were, how is it a good idea to replace forests rich in biodiversity with a monoculture? We already have one-species plantations, but we also need to consider the value of mixed-species areas for selective logging, even if it does make future operations slightly less efficient.

Scientists, environmental groups and activists are consistently ignored and/or condemned and vilified for their attempts to highlight the value of forests for water quality, preventing erosion, mitigating against climate change, maintaining biodiversity, providing habitat, and supporting local industries like milling, oyster-farming and tourism. Instead, unsustainable logging practices that turn most of our precious forests into a waste product are encouraged to continue.

The time for ending the conflict in the forests and moving towards a truly sustainable forest future for Australia is now.

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