

Subject: Letter to the Editor, AFR. 29 June 2020

PM's visit to the Eden chipmill

Laura Tingle (AFR 27/6/20) gives an excellent description of the Prime Minister's visit to the Eden chipmill last week. But there was another, even more surreal dimension to it.

By donning the fluoro vest and waving around a blank cheque for the woodchipping industry, Scott Morrison was conscripting taxpayers into the longest continuously running environmental campaign in Australia, based on false premises.

Using astonishing exaggerations such as: "some 600 jobs in Eden depended on the mill" and "if we'd lost the mill, we would have lost the community," he gave the impression that woodchipping is *the* major economic driver and employer in the region. Both are wrong. Divide that 'jobs' figure by 20 and you are closer to the truth for chipmill employees.

Direct jobs in native forest logging are less than 1% of total workforce in Bega Valley and Eurobodalla Shires. It's *not* a big employer.

Until the virus pandemic, there were more jobs in the arts and entertainment in the Bega Valley Shire.

With 80% of South Coast forest available for logging burnt in the summer fires, the consequences of the Prime Minister's latest political stunt will be all too real and lasting for the forests and wildlife of the region.

Harriett Swift

Harriett Swift PO Box 915 Bega NSW 2550 Australia 0414908997