

## **MEDIA RELEASE: Liberal and Labor In Reckless Bid For Woodchip Votes.**

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### **ChipBusters**

**SERCA South East Region Conservation Alliance**

**Environment East Gippsland**

**CHIPSTOP**

**Huon Valley Environment Centre**

Conservation groups are horrified by the announcement yesterday from the Liberal Party that they will clear away all obstacles under the Renewable Energy legislation to permit the woodchip industry to burn native forests for electricity. 8 million tonnes a year or more of Australia's forests are at risk.

"At last, one of the two dinosaurs has come clean that a few thousand woodchip votes around the country are far more important to it than protecting old growth forests, carbon stores, biodiversity, water catchments and rural industries and communities that depend on these values" said spokespersons for the groups.

"This is an environmentally and financially reckless policy and must be rejected for the good of the country."

"The Liberals are offering \$42 million of taxpayers' dollars for these votes plus robbing the genuine renewable energy industries like solar, wind and wave power of many millions more."

"The Labor Party is also encouraging the woodchip industry to burn forests for electricity."

"The Labor Government has refused twice in the last year to amend the huge loophole in the legislation that has encouraged the woodchip industry to start planning for these environmental disasters in at least four states, with a nod and a wink from the ALP."

"Australia's already shaky reputation as an environmentally responsible nation will go straight down the drain if this goes ahead. We will be at loggerheads with the UN and every nation that is genuinely trying to save the world's forests."

"There are a number of other handouts of taxpayers' money to the woodchip industry in this Liberal Party policy but the great threat to forests, in which both Labor and Liberal Parties are complicit, comes from giving a dying industry a massive new market for decades to come."

"Already, the first planning application for a woodchip-fired power station, at Eden on the far south coast of NSW, has been lodged with the Keneally Labor Government, a clear signal that the industry expects to get accredited for Renewable Energy Certificates, effectively green energy bonuses for shams that will burn forests for electricity."

For further comment and documents: -

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[WWW.NOFORESTFURNACES.ORG.AU](http://WWW.NOFORESTFURNACES.ORG.AU)

Further detail and comments: -

“The Coalition’s Plan for Real Action to Support Forestry” released 19 August 2010. Point 9 deals with Renewable energy accreditation for woodchip-fired power stations.

The policy also announces measures that would

1. further weaken environmental controls on the industry,
2. put a freeze on any further forest reserves
3. remove public scrutiny of Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs), by automatically rolling them over for periods of 5 years at a time.

About \$5 million of the \$42 million package will come from funds taken from the Regional Education Fund and \$15 million will come from the National Bushfire Mitigation Program, which has been included in the forestry policy.

The lion’s share of the \$42 million, some \$20 million, would go to yet again bailing out logging contractors who this time have been affected by a combination the Global Financial Crisis and a rejection of Australian native forest woodchips by international markets. The international paper manufacturers are increasingly rejecting Australia’s native forest woodchips, but the Liberal and Labor Parties are refusing to accept the verdict of the market place. Instead, they want to prop up this dying industry with yet more taxpayer cash bailouts. The RFAs have been a disaster for Australia and should be axed as the legal and policy basis for managing our native forests. Repeated breaches of wildlife and water protection conditions by the State forestry agencies in Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia and New South Wales make a mockery of the RFA’s. Taxpayer subsidies to the native forest logging and woodchipping industry in all States undermine the private plantation industry.