

## **MEDIA RELEASE 20 August 2010**

### **Liberal and Labor forest policies an environmental disaster, Louise Morris, Conservation Association WA. 20.08.2010**

Western Australia's Peak Environment group has labelled the both Liberal and Labor Parties policies on forests a disaster the environment in WA if it were to be implemented.

Conservation Council Director Piers Verstegen said "Almost 80% of Australians support a stop to native forest logging with a transfer of the industry to plantations[1], however the Liberal policy would do the opposite, by making it easy to log our native forests and burn the wood as furnace fodder"

"Burning our native forests to generate electricity is about the worst thing that could be done for the environment, our forests, and our climate."

Already WA's forest management agency, the Forest Products Commission (FPC), is trying to sell up to 400,000 tonnes a year of low grade jarrah and marri logs to be burnt to produce electricity.

"There is nothing sustainable, or renewable about burning our last remaining native forests for energy, however both Labor and Liberal policies support the listing of native forests burning under Renewable Energy legislation."

"Even more concerning is that if Mr Abbott's forest policy is implemented, under a Coalition Government there will be no further forest protection unless proposed by the logging industry.

"Furthermore, both the Liberal and Labor parties would provide more than \$20 million to support this unsustainable and financially unviable industry which cannot stand on its own without ongoing taxpayer subsidies."

"Logging is not the only threat to our forests, with fungal diseases and climate change placing pressure on forest ecosystems. It is critical that we stop native forest logging as soon as possible, rather than follow the reckless approach to forest policy proposed by the Liberal Party.

"Our Native forests store vast amounts of carbon, which increases while they continue to grow. This carbon is released into the atmosphere by logging and burning and not recaptured for decades, possibly centuries."

"We cannot allow the forest destruction caused by woodchipping to be replaced by the equally voracious threat of a falsely badged 'renewable' industry that burns forests for electricity,

"In the closing days of the election we call on Australians to reject policies that allow further destruction of our native forests, especially by allowing them to be burned as so-called 'renewable energy' source."