

**CHIPSTOP
SERCA - South East Region Conservation Alliance
CHIPBUSTERS**

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LOGGERS' UNION TRIES TO EXPLOIT KOALA CRISIS

Forest campaigners have accused the union representing loggers of exploiting the current crisis over logging of Mumbulla forest koala habitat in an opportunistic grab for increased membership.

Community members have maintained an active vigil and picket at each entrance to the forest every morning since logging started there on 29th March.

Chipstop Convener, Ms Harriett Swift said that an organiser from the CFMEU, Mr Dusty Miller has visited the logging site on two days this week, on one occasion forcing his way through a conservation picket line in an aggressive manner.

"The CFMEU is a powerful policy influence within the Labor Party and is one of its biggest donors," she said.

"The Forestry Division is one of the few unions that shamelessly joins with an industry lobby to promote the interests of the industry, often at the expense of most of its own members," according to Bega Valley Shire Greens Councillor, Keith Hughes

"It is responsible for representing the interests of plantation workers as well as loggers in the native forest sector.

"There are times when it is impossible to reconcile the competing interests of the two sectors.

"By promoting native forest logging the union is undermining the interests of plantations whose economic viability is being threatened by under priced native forest logs," he said.

Ms Swift said that the Forestry Division of the CFMEU has often sold its plantation members up the river by hopping into bed with the industry lobby on native forest logging policy.

"In spite of advising its members to vote for John Howard in 2004, the Forestry Division of the CFMEU has had unprecedented power since the Rudd Government came to office. But its close links with the industry lobby have often distanced it from the true interests of most of its membership, which is overwhelmingly plantation based," she said.

"The Forestry Division is also using the present crisis to poach members from other unions," Ms Swift said.

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