

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Bega Valley Shire Council gives green light for native forests to go up in smoke**

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW has condemned the Bega Valley Shire Council's approval for a pellet plant processing valuable native forests into low-value wood 'pellets' for domestic heating or industrial processes.

Local conservation groups fear pellet production will open the way for an escalation of local forest logging, with the Eden chipmill already seeking approval for a wood-fired power station using largely forest fuel.

"The Bega Valley Shire Council has made a hasty decision to escalate the destruction of its precious native forest but it will pay the high price environmental price of burning forests for power for years to come," Chief Executive Officer Pepe Clarke said today.

"This short-sighted approval of the pellet plant at Eden chipmill will lock in the ongoing unsustainable waste of our native forests.

"Up in smoke will go diverse forest types that have taken years, sometimes decades to grow. Habitat for native animals, the opportunity of ongoing carbon storage and essential life-giving services including water filtering and the creation of richer soils will all be lost.

"Turning native forests into pellets for heating and electricity is a wasteful nineteenth-century practice inappropriate for meeting today's energy needs and addressing the challenges of climate change. Our native forests are not a clean or renewable energy source," Mr Clarke said.

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