

MEDIA RELEASE: WOODCHIPPING IS NOT GOOD FOR KOALAS. HARRIETT SWIFT
28.10.2011

The now notorious comment from embattled Environment Minister, Robyn Parker that logging is good for koalas came as no surprise to residents of the south east.

“We have been hearing nonsense like this for years from the woodchipping industry and from Forests NSW,” said Harriett Swift, Convener of the Chipstop Campaign against Woodchipping.

“Managers of the Eden chipmill regularly articulate this absurd proposition and a few years ago they even had the cheek to put a koala on their corporate stationary,” Ms Swift said.

“They have never been able to explain why – if koalas need loggers – the koala managed to survive successfully on this earth for more than 20 million years without a woodchipping industry,” she said.

“The woodchipping of Mumbulla Forest last year was a major blow to the survival of the koala as a species on the far south coast.”

“The then Labor Government belatedly recognised the public opposition to logging of koala habitat by calling a pre-election halt to logging in coastal forests between Bermagui and Bega last year in response to sustained community protests.”

“Now that the election is over and the new Government has a record majority, it is displaying total contempt for public opinion and for the future of Australia’s most popular native animal,” Ms Swift said.

“While Minister Parker’s comment is ridiculous, it does not really stand out among the ridiculous statements that are made every day to justify native forest woodchipping.”

“Koala surveys over recent years show that there are probably fewer than 50 koalas left on the far south coast and their stronghold is in Mumbulla State Forest, just north of Bega.”

“While it was a combination of factors such as fire, disease, land clearing for agriculture and predation that has brought the koala to its current dire situation, it is now logging for woodchips which has the potential to finish them off,” Ms Swift said.

28 October 2011

0414908997

Image caption: The Eden chipmill once used images of koalas on its corporate envelopes. The koala was once the pin up species for the woodchipping industry because they viewed it as one of the few threatened species that does not require tree hollows to survive.