

MEDIA RELEASE: FOREST CAMPAIGNERS WELCOME COASTAL FLORA RESERVES, BUT THERE IS A DOWNSIDE. SERCA. 01.03.2016

Forest campaigners in the south east have welcomed the Government decision to create new Flora Reserves in coastal forests between Bermagui and Tathra.

Convenor of the Chipstop Campaign, Harriett Swift says that ending logging in these important forests makes environmental and economic sense.

“It can help save the koala and other threatened species and would save taxpayers money if it were not accompanied by ridiculous new haulage subsidies to the logging industry,” she said.

“Further logging of these forests would have made a loss and it would have saved taxpayers money to simply stop it.

“There is no reason for taxpayers to fork out another \$2.5m in subsidies for log haulage to take logs to the Eden chipmill. “

“While other industries such as steel and motor vehicles have to sink or swim in the market place, there seems to be a magical force field around logging that protects it from market realities.”

“Logging of these coastal forests has been highly controversial with extended community blockades and protests at Bermagui, Murrah, Mumbulla and Tanja.”

“It is especially pleasing that Mumbulla, which is so important for the local Aboriginal community, will now be safe.

Mumbulla logging was found by a court to be illegal in 2011 because it was a gazetted Aboriginal Place.

“The logger contracted to the Eden chipmill there was compensated with \$18,000 to stop logging. The Aboriginal community received no compensation for the damage done to their priceless heritage.”

Ms Swift said that logging proposed for Tanja was deferred twice because of community protests and the discovery of koalas.

“At one time the woodchip yield was even increased by 20% to compensate for wood lost because of the moratorium in Bermagui, Murrah and Mumbulla.”

Ms Swift said “while we would prefer to see the forests receive the strongest protection as a National Park, the creation of Flora Reserves is a wonderful first step.

“The downsides of this decision are further subsidies to the industry and more intensive logging in forests to the north. These are significant and unnecessary costs.”

“The forest campaign will continue until all native forest in the region is stopped,” Ms Swift said.

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