



South East Region Conservation Alliance

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MEDIA RELEASE

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New report on native forest logging gives “thumbs down” to Eden woodchipping

Eden woodchipping has received a decisive “thumbs down” in a new report on NSW public forest management released this week.

The “Report card on 20 years of Regional Forest Agreements in NSW”[1] recommends that native forest logging on public land should end when the Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) expire.

The Eden RFA will be first cab off the rank in NSW, expiring in 2019 and the first test of whether the Government is prepared to adopt a new approach.

“Under the RFA legal framework, Eden woodchipping hit record levels and has been the benchmark for intensive logging, leaving a cruel and destructive legacy,” according to Deputy Convener of the South East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA), Harriett Swift.

“The RFAs never recognised that forests are more valuable economically and environmentally – for attracting tourists, storing carbon, securing water supplies and soils and providing a home and a future for wildlife than as woodchips.”

“This needs to change,” she said.

The report comes just weeks after an economic report by The Australia Institute showed that losses from native forest logging cost taxpayers \$78 million over the past seven years in subsidies, and that jobs in native forest logging were as low as 600 state-wide.

The expiry of the Eden RFA provides a wonderful opportunity for the State and federal Governments to manage native forests for much higher values than woodchips and to lift a heavy burden on NSW taxpayers.

“All eyes will be on Eden as the first and worst RFA in NSW as the expiry date approaches,” she said.

Key findings

- Australia has already lost 50% of forest and woodland cover, and 70% of remaining forests have been degraded by logging;
- Australia’s forests and their biodiversity are too important to trash by logging: logging currently takes place in two global Biodiversity Hotspots, the Forests of East Australia and Southwest Australia. There are only 36 Hotspots world-wide;
- Most forest national parks promised during RFA negotiations have not eventuated;
- Logging kills forest mammals like gliders, possums and wombats, and the number of forest species listed as threatened is increasing;
- Populations of iconic Australian forest species such as koalas have plummeted
- Logging drives Key Threatening Processes like loss of tree hollows and dieback;
- The RFAs are a giant loophole that let corporations avoid Federal Government law, and instead of protecting forests they allow them to be flogged with impunity;
- In NSW, logging now removes twice as much tree cover as urban development and agriculture combined and the intensity is increasing;
- Logging has serious impacts on soil and water supplies and makes forests more fire prone;

- Logged forests store only half their potential carbon and ending logging would immediately reduce our carbon emissions[2];
- Logging is a bad choice when it comes to forest management: it would be much better to use them to capture and store carbon, boost tourism and safeguard water supplies.

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[1] <http://www.npansw.org.au/>

[2] For more information on the use carbon and tourism in the southern forest region, see: <http://www.greatsouthernforest.org.au/proposal.html>