

The **Climate Commission's Report: Critical Decade** by, Professor Will Steffen, Climate Commissioner. Released 05.2011.

Herewith a few points from the report pertaining to forests. The term 'deforestation' is not one which we use in regard to forestry activities in SE NSW. The terms 'logging', 'thinning', 'harvesting' and 'woodchipping' are more relevant in this part of Australia.

.....

The Critical Decade states that the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation are the two main activities which are influencing changes in global climate. It claims that about 11% of net CO₂ emissions globally originate from land ecosystems, primarily from deforestation. The report also claims that deforestation increases carbon dioxide emissions and triggers atmospheric warming which cannot be explained by other natural solar or global phenomena.

The report finds that short-term mono crop growth, while yielding some quick gains over a few years, cannot sequester atmospheric carbon indefinitely and cannot ever store the same amount of carbon as an old growth forest or its regrowth. This is qualified by research which found that natural ecosystems store more carbon than the ecosystems that replace them after they are converted or actively managed for production.

A study found that the forests of southeast Australia are **the world's most carbon dense forests** because of their uniquely favourable growing conditions. The report recommends the preservation of these older, complex, multi-aged and layered forests and that eliminating harvesting of natural forests as perhaps the most important policy measure that can be taken to reduce emissions from land ecosystems.

To this I add personal comments:

- Eliminating harvesting carbon rich forests may help prevent the 'critical' decade from becoming a 'disastrous' one.
- This report echoes the calls which SERCA has been making for years to put an end to logging of native forests.
- Over 75%* of people surveyed in 2009 want native forest logging for woodchips to cease and for the Eden chipmill to close.
- Last week two conservationists faced 3-year sentences for charges relating to forest protection activities, (thankfully). The charges were dropped. So the situation where of one arm of the law protects the law relating to access to the forests and another dismisses it is ironic at least.
- A government-commissioned report recommends protection of the forests and a law exists which permits their destruction. How the government responds to this 'critical' report will be interesting.
- The logging and woodchip activities in Eden continue as do threats of a proposed biomass burner and now, a wood pellet pilot project.
- Incendiary bombs (ping pong balls containing condies crystals and glycol ethylene) were dropped from a helicopter into the foothills of Gulaga two weeks ago to get rid of all that 'potentially dangerous leaf litter' (as told to me last week by a FNSW employee).

Our beautiful carbon rich forests continue to be destroyed. It is essential that we all continue to keep politicians aware of our stand on native forest logging. Please see: <http://www.serca.org.au> for links to **Lobby** details and **Petitions**.

* <http://leerhiannon.org.au/news/public-says-no-to-logging-old-growth-forests-close-eden-chip-mill>
For references to studies mentioned, pls. see: <http://climatecommission.gov.au/topics/the-critical-decade/>

Bronte Somerset, 29 May 2011