

## Woodchipping is destroying our native forests

- The vast majority of wood extracted from our south eastern forests is woodchipped and exported to supply the Asian pulp and paper industry.
- The South East Fibre Exports (SEFE) chipmill at Eden exports over 840,000 tonnes of woodchips each year (1 million tonnes in 2006).
- Government statistics for 2005 reveal that of the wood taken from native forests:
  - 90% in the Eden region
  - 80% in East Gippsland
  - 55% in the Southern Region (includes Eurobodalla forests) ended up at the Eden Chipmill.
- The remaining wood was mainly used for low value sawmill products such as pallets.
- Whilst wood chipping is defined as a “wastewood” industry, these figures clearly demonstrate that it is not. Rather, it is the driver of logging and destruction of our native forests.
- The Eden chipmill cannot process waste wood, such as the crowns, branches or butts, which are a by-product of saw logging.
- The chipmill can only chip whole logs. The “waste” is burned in the forest, adding yet more carbon dioxide to our atmosphere.
- Furthermore, the woodchips are exported to Japan at a giveaway price.

## **THERE IS A SOLUTION**

- There are other sources of fibre for making paper including sugar cane and hemp as well as recycled materials.
- Worldwide 41% of paper and cardboard are being recycled. If we could emulate Holland (where 96% is recycled), our paper recycling rate would more than double.

**Woodchipping of SE NSW native forests could be ended if these steps were taken.**

**An interim measure would be to transfer it to existing plantations already established on cleared agricultural land. The logging industry could be transferred to plantations.**



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## **WHY WE NEED UNDISTURBED NATIVE FORESTS TO HELP US FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE**

- In 1992, 1700 of the world's leading scientists, including the majority of Nobel Prize winners in the sciences, issued the “World Scientists Warning to Humanity”. It warned that we are altering the planet to an extent that it won't be able to sustain life as we know it, and that we have only a few decades to confront this threat.
- The warning fell on deaf ears. It is only very recently that many of us have acknowledged the huge threat from climate change and the related severe droughts that we are starting to experience.
- Greenhouse gases trap heat near the Earth's surface. As they increase in the atmosphere, the extra heat they trap leads to global warming. This warming in turn places pressure on the Earth's climate system which can lead to climate change.
- It is the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that is linked to climate change.

**Nature has created a self sustaining carbon cycle  
which has kept carbon dioxide levels in the  
atmosphere in the past at a workable level.**

- However, the amount of carbon dioxide that humans have added to the atmosphere in the last two hundred years has upset the balance.

## The amount of carbon dioxide absorbed from the atmosphere is huge

- For the past couple of decades, scientists have been monitoring how much of the carbon dioxide produced by humans from burning fossil fuels is absorbed by this natural carbon cycle.
  - On an annual basis:
    - 2 gigatonnes is absorbed by the oceans
    - 1.5 gigatonnes is absorbed by plant life on land
- 1 gigatonne = 1,000,000,000 tonnes
- Were it not for plants and algae we would soon suffocate in carbon dioxide and run out of oxygen.

## Forests are the lungs of our planet

- They actively take in carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and create a waste stream of oxygen which goes back into the atmosphere.
- Australian forests are a terrific asset because they can help to reduce the severity of global warming and climate change.
- A single tree will absorb one tonne of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.
- Carbon absorbed from the carbon dioxide may be stored as wood in a tree for hundreds of years.
- Some of the absorbed carbon also ends up in the soil.

**Absorption of carbon dioxide from the Atmosphere, and storage of the carbon is an important ecosystem service carried out by forests for us free of charge.**

## Undisturbed Australian forests are disappearing.

- Since European settlement in Australia forest cover has been reduced by half of its original area.
- Forests now cover only 5% of the continent's total landmass. Only 10% of what remains has escaped major disturbance from logging.

## Logging forests is putting carbon dioxide back in the atmosphere

- When forests are logged and burned, we not only lose the carbon absorption ability of the trees. The carbon store in the wood is released **back to the atmosphere** as carbon dioxide.
- Disturbance of the soil is also serious because it too releases carbon back into the atmosphere. This can't be rapidly reversed simply by allowing a new forest to grow.
- At a recent Climate Action Network Australia (CANA) meeting results were presented of some new studies on the effect of logging on carbon storage in forests of south eastern Australia.
- Analysis revealed that **logging in Victoria last year** led to the destruction of 10 000 hectares of forests and woodland with the release of 10 million tonnes of greenhouse gas pollution into the atmosphere.
- This is the equivalent of putting an **extra** 2.3 million cars on the road in Victoria for one year.
- Recent calculations for south eastern NSW reveal an amount equivalent to putting an **extra** 1 million cars on the road in NSW for one year.
- The large volume of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere through logging would balance out the positive effects of spending millions of dollars on cleaner energy policies.

**Until we stop logging and clearing forests and woodlands governments cannot be seen to be seriously addressing climate change.**