

Submission
No 48

INQUIRY INTO PROVISIONS OF THE FORESTRY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Organisation: Chipstop Campaign against Woodchipping

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This Bill, along with current processes in train to renew Regional Forest Agreements and Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOAs) governing native forest logging in NSW are based on a delusion that native forest woodchipping and environmental protection are compatible. They are simply clearing the legal decks for the industry to go for broke while there are still some trees remaining.

For decades the far south coast region has endured of the most intensive logging in the state to supply the Eden chipmill. The Government should stop deluding itself and the public that our forests are a magic pudding that can keep on producing woodchips indefinitely and pretend that environmental values are being protected.

There must be a clear and workable plan within any new legal framework to manage the closure of the woodchipping industry. Woodchippers must not simply walk away from the environmental destruction they have caused or their obligations to workers, as mining companies have done in the past.

Some obvious measures would include, but not be limited to:

- a) A remediation bond payable by the owners of the Eden woodchip mill to cover costs of restoring the chipmill site for other purposes once the chipmill closes.
- b) A levy on the Forestry Corporation per hectare logged to provide for the restoration of native forests logged between now and the closure of the native forest industry.
- c) A water quality levy imposed on all logging operations undertaken in estuary catchments such as Wonboyn and river catchments.
- d) A road maintenance fee to ensure that roads used by log trucks cease to be a financial burden on other road users, councils and taxpayers until logging ends.
- e) A retraining fund payable by industry employers to entitle all workers currently employed in the logging industry to a retraining package to acquire new skills.
- f) A fire control levy payable by the industry to the Rural Fire Service per hectare logged, in recognition of the fact that dense regrowth forests are more fire prone than mature unlogged forests.
- g) Twofold Bay seabed damage prevention and remediation levy on woodchip carriers using loading facilities at the chipmill, in compensation for degradation of habitat of species such as the weedy sea dragon and green sea turtle by woodchip carriers.
- h) If the RFAs are renewed, Wood Supply Agreements should be for realistic timeframes (no more than 5 years), should not contain "take or pay" clauses and not carry unwarranted penalties for any early cessation of access to wood supply.