

The industrial logging of native forests and woodlands and the use of forest biomass as a fossil fuel substitute is disastrous for climate and biodiversity and should end, immediately.

Australia's energy policies are poorly-gearred to respond to the climate crisis. As well as lifting our ambition for reducing fossil fuel use we need new domestic and international forest protection policies and ecological restoration as a major element in climate policies.

Large scale forest biomass combustion is increasing atmospheric carbon faster than regrowing forests can draw it down. It is more emissive than burning coal. It is not carbon neutral within the timeframe the IPCC warns emissions must cease if climate disaster is to be avoided, that is, the next 10 to 12 years.

The IPCC states we must remove as much carbon as possible from the atmosphere in addition to stopping further emissions - within the next decade. The protection and, where practicable, the ecological restoration of biodiverse native forests will reduce emissions, and provide the most secure and immediately available means of large scale carbon drawdown and storage.

In Europe and the United States there is increasing alarm at the health and environmental impacts of burning forests for energy and biofuels, and at the financial incentives available to this industry which drive global deforestation and biodiversity loss. Nonetheless, in Australia, there is strong pressure to maintain current logging regimes as a basis for new large scale forest biomass industries envisaged to operate in both domestic and export markets.

Large areas of Australia's forests have been cleared, some, but not all, irretrievably. Large tracts of current forests are severely degraded by past and current logging regimes and well below their carbon carrying capacities. Many forest species, once abundant, are now severely depleted.

Ten to twelve years to turn around a dangerously warming climate is a very short time span. We call on all politicians at Commonwealth and State levels and all candidates at coming elections to recognise the urgency of incorporating protection and restoration of native forests into energy policies and, when elected, to collaborate to effect that protection.

Specifically, we call for

- **an end to industrial native forest logging**
- **prohibition of the export of native forest biomass, and removal of incentives for its use for electricity and biofuels¹**
- **assistance for native forest protection and ecological restoration**

¹ Including repealing amendments in Part 4 of Schedule of 1 of the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment Bill 2015 reinstating native forest biomass as an eligible renewable energy source, i.e. attracting subsidies.