

Forests under threat

By SHAU TEO,
SRC Environment Officer

BADJA

Badja State Forest, east of Cooma NSW, is still under the threat of being clearfelled and woodchipped by the Carr government. This forest represents the largest old growth forests in NSW and is a refuge for numerous threatened species. Siltation of water supply/catchments of local townships will be another consequence of logging here.

Our athletic Bob Carr has pulled a gold medal winning back-flip, Promising to protect NSW's old growth forests, whilst Forestry Minister Kim Yeadon is directing State Forests to log a pristine old growth wilderness. Our trustworthy Premier has also ignored his 1995 promise to end export woodchipping by the year 2000.

What can you do?
For directions to the Fort Badja

Blockade come see me in the SRC(There are also directions in the enviro petition box in the SRC Lounge), there are also petitions to sign here, also give Bobby a ring and tellhim to take some medication for his amnesia.

BIOMASS

The Biomass industry another threat to our precious forests. Biomass energy aims to use forest "waste" as a fuel resource for electricity generation. The problem lies in the question of what is defined as waste? It doesn't take a scientist to understand that the natural process of dead wood, leaves and other decomposing organic matter plays an integral part in returning nutrients to the soils in an ecosystem, and is essential for the maintenance, survival and vitality of an ecosystem and wildlife within it. There is no such thing as forest waste.

The logging industry classifies the following as waste:

-Any trees that are not suitable

for sawlogs (too big or small).

-Wrong species to make timber out of undergrowth removed to promote the growth of sawlogs whole trees being used for woodchips.

Recently the federal government passed a two per cent renewable energy legislation which allows native forests to be burned for electricity. Furthermore it is promoting native forests as a renewable resource in a desperate attempt to meet greenhouse emission reduction obligations. The forestry and biomass industry argue that burning wood instead of charcoal is a cleaner, greener method of electricity production that will lower our greenhouse gas This is a ridiculous illusion that emmissions would look good on paper but in reality would not mean shit: carbon levels are measured in respect to emissions from coal not from wood. Therefore, if wood can replace coal, the forest industry, the biomass industry, the woodchipping industry and the government can all have a tea party. The fact is that these wood fired power stations would produce five times as much carbon dioxide in comparison to coal fired power stations.

Last year three wood fired power stations were proposed by the Forest Products Association for the areas of Grafton, Bulahdelah and Moruya, each of them set to consume 280 000 tonnes of wood per year. How can this be promoted as a sustainable energy alternative? Where is the long-term economic viability?

With a steadily diminishing woodchipping industry (suffering from overseas competition), biomass energy opens up a whole new market for woodchips. The current woodchipping legislation allows 500,000 tonnes for export annually. With the sharp increase in demand for wood "waste" to feed biomass power stations, an increase in native woodchip production could be up to one million tonnes.

What we need to beware of is which electricity suppliers are supporting the burning of biomass from unsustainable sources such as our forests.

Some electricity retailers not buying biomass include:

-*Australian Inland energy (solar future).*

-*Citypower (Ecopower-Hydro)*

-*Integral Energy (Business Green Power)*

Retailers who are buying biomass:

-*NorthPower*

-*Great Southern Energy*

-*AGL Green Energy*

-*Advance Energy Australia*

-*Clean Green Energy Company.*

-*Pacific Power*

For more information or form letters you can send to your electricity retailer, come see Catherine Blakely or myself in the SRC. For a more comprehensive update, visit the Colong Foundation website on

www.colongwilderness.org.au/burning.html

If you want to get to Badja and have no transport contact

-Sydney Wilderness Society on (02) 9282 9553 or email Annie Coleman
amc02@uow.edu.au

-The Badja Hotline 0407 496 019

-SEFA on 9878 3509

-Andrew Wong 6249 6491 or 0429 471 029

