

# Biomass protest action

15<sup>th</sup> August 2013

A relatively small but significant protest action was held outside Parliament House on 15<sup>th</sup> August, to protest the proposed changes to the *Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2009*, that will allow the burning of native forest timber to generate electricity.

Organised by Lorraine Bower for The Australian Forests and Climate Alliance (AFCA), the action saw representatives from many of the peak environment groups including the Nature conservation Council's Campaigns Director, Kate Smolski; Keith Muir of the Colong Foundation; and Jeff Angel, Director of the Total Environment Centre, while the Clarence Environment Centre, and North Coast Environment Council were represented by John and Patricia Edwards

Not surprisingly the only politicians in attendance were the NSW Greens, represented by John Kaye, David Shoebridge, and Jan Barham, with the former members being among those who addressed the crowd.

The protest also heard from Jeff Angel, who the theme revolving around the patently false claim that the propose changes would allow only forest 'waste' to be burned. Essentially, that waste is not tree crowns and stumps, because the cost of chipping the material is just not economical. What will be taken from our forests is logs, in exactly the same way as they are being taken for wood-chip. Those logs will come from defective trees, and tree species that are unsuitable for lumber.



**The NCC's Campaigns Director, Kate Smolski, addresses the protest.**

According to Lorraine Bower, *“The government is giving the logging industry the green light to use any whole tree not suitable for saw-logging. That means over 85% of all the trees logged in NSW could be eligible to be burnt in furnaces for electricity”*.

The bottom line is that we don't need wood fired power, and we certainly don't need another source of greenhouse pollution. There is no shortage of electricity, and Australia is blessed with vast quantities of renewable, non-polluting, energy resources such as solar, wind, geothermal, tide, and wave. There is enough wind resource alone to supply all of Australia's current electricity demand many times over.



**"Cranky Koala" aka Mark Selmes.**

The threat posed to wildlife by the proposed legislative changes was placed at the forefront by the presence of 'Cranky Koala' aka Mark Selmes, a familiar sight outside Parliament House, having made a solitary protest earlier this year on every sitting day.

Of all the threatened species directly impacted by logging, Koalas are probably the most affected. They cannot seek shelter in hollows, and their preferred feed tree species are

the same species preferred by the timber industry.

Our forests provide us with the air we breathe, and filters the water we drink. They support biodiversity, something that provides us with everything we eat and much of what we wear, More importantly, with climate change a crucial consideration, they store carbon, and should never be burned to generate electricity. The unsustainable logging of native forests has to end.



**L to R: Cranky Koala, John Kaye (Greens), Jeff Angel (Total Environment Centre), David Shoebridge (Greens), Keith Muir (Colong Foundation), Patricia Edwards (Clarence Environment Centre & North Coast Environment Council).**