Press Release
Wombat Forest Society
3nd October

CONSERVATION, REAL JOBS???
INDUSTRY MUST ACT NOW.....

The Wombat Forest Society is totally dismayed with the local timber industry's reluctance to seriously consider the license buy-back opportunities offered by the Back's Government's "Our Forests, Our Future" initiative. It would seem that the Wombat Forest has finally a responsible and scientifically based sustainable yield of 8600m3, adequate workers/industry packages, a willing Government and still the bigger end of the timber industry and their woodchipping partners, continue to push the irresponsible position of non engagement and continued logging volumes.

The Wombat Forest Society, after years of meaningful, honest and cooperative engagement, are now asking the local industry to take a responsible 'whole of community & environment position'. This logging season, our largest sawmill, Black Forest (Woodend), will take a log quota two and half times above the sustainable yield.

The most realistic scenario for the future of the industry would be for an immediate cessation of the Black Forest license (22000m3) and the remaining licenses of the smaller sawmills to be halved to meet the sustainable yield of 8600m3.

The Wombat Forest Society is launching a boycott campaign against Black Forest Timber with the slogan "Don't buy Black Forest Timber- It will cost you the Wombat". Black Forest's B-grade log demands have certainly been a major contributor to the destruction of the Wombat Forest. While many in our community have been screaming that the Wombat was being slaughtered, Black Forest has maintained the pressure to supply unsustainable volumes of these precious big logs.The Wombat Forest Society will be announcing a strategy for re-employment of displaced timber workers shortly.

Forests are finite, and it takes a lifetime to grow a good tree, it should be no surprise that the inevitable 'crunch time' is here. What the sections of the industry that want the right to 'cut out' the forest need to remember is that these are publicly owned forests, that contain many values and resources other than timber. There is no magic wand that can fix this situation, the reality is the Wombat has been negligently managed by NRE, in order to facilitate the greed of a few.

Victorians will not allow any attempt to cut-out what is left of the forest. The rise in community concerns and action that have arisen from the over-logging, will only continue to escalate until the whole industry is forced to shut down entirely.

The Wombat Forest Society supports the ongoing smaller local sawmills, such as Dwyers (Leonards Hill), Boases (Daylesford), Harding (Bullarto) and Friths (Lyonville), as they currently deal with low timber volumes and they would seem best equipped to progress any future sustainable industry. The local forests are too critical to the whole community for such an ongoing and irresponsible approach. The local timber industry slogan during the Regional Forest Agreement was "Conservation and Real Jobs" and now it would appear the time has cometh.

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