



Coastwatchers

**Eurobodalla's
environment guardian**

MEDIA RELEASE 14 February 2018

- **South Coast Conservationists Rally against Rotten Forest Deals (Regional Forest Agreements)**

Coastwatchers, other conservation groups and supporters are today rallying at Batemans Bay to protest plans by the Turnbull and Berejiklian governments to lock up 2 million hectares of public forests, hand them over to big business like the Eden Wood Chip Mill and throw away the key.

President and spokesperson for Coastwatchers Noel Plumb said “The NSW Government is in Batemans Bay today staging a sham public consultation process by calling for interested people to ‘drop in’ to a propaganda display that is designed to lend credibility to these Rotten Forest Deals (Regional Forest Agreements).”

“The deals are being sold as the renewal of the 20 year Regional Forest Agreements (RFA’s) presently in place but due to expire over the next two to three years, including the Southern Forest Region which covers the south coast from Nowra to Eden and back to the great dividing range and Tumut.”

“We are here to oppose any renewal of the discredited RFA’s and expose the sham consultation, which is being boycotted by most NSW conservation groups who have been involved in the fight to save the forests. We are also here to put the spotlight on an invitation only, secretive briefing for logging industry stakeholders which appears to have excluded all relevant local and regional conservation groups concerned about the massive damage to our forests by the current rotten deals.”

“The Governments are rushing to sign off new, long term, Rotten Forest Deals (Regional Forest Agreements) that show the corruption, privilege and desperation by the both of the Governments and the industry to lock these arrangements in place before either Government has to face the voters again. This flies in the face of overwhelming support by the general public to end native forest logging and protect our precious forests, wildlife, carbon stores and water resources against massive industrial logging and woodchipping.”

“We invite the public to contact us and we will show them what is really happening in our forests right here within spitting distance of Batemans Bay:-

Intensive logging for low value products like firewood and woodchips which is destroying the forest ecosystems and pushing wonderful forest animals such as Koalas, Greater Gliders, Yellow Bellied Gliders and many more to regional extinction on the South Coast.

Sprawling logging “waste” and slash piles that create unacceptable increase fire risks for many local communities and beloved holiday areas including Pebbly Beach, Depot Beach, Durras, Murramarang National Park, Long Beach, Batemans Bay, Mogo and Moruya. These piles are left unburnt for at least a year and sometimes three years by the Forestry Corporation creating an unacceptable risk to the forests, the townspeople and those who live in the forests.

This heavy logging and burning all leads to a great increase in the overall threat of wildfires and the massive loss of carbon stored in trees hundreds of years old, directly aggravating dangerous climate change.”

“This has got to stop – now,” said Mr Plumb. “There must be no renewal or further extension of these Rotten Forest Deals, aka Regional Forest Agreements. There are infinitely better ways to use the forests that boost the regional economy, increase jobs, protect wildlife, reduce the fire risks and respond responsibly to climate change.

Further comment: Noel Plumb 0425 23 83 03 President Coastwatchers

Photographs of recent irresponsible logging destruction are available.

www.coastwatchers.com.au