

SPEECH NOTES – LAUNCH OF THE GREAT SOUTHERN FOREST NATIONAL PARK CAMPAIGN

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For almost as long as I can remember as a forest campaigner, opinion polls have shown a strong majority of Australians want an end to native forest logging. Even polls commissioned by the industry showed that voters don't want native forest logging and that the industry had lost its social licence.

Strong public support has been ignored by political decision makers; it hasn't been enough to save the forests. But it's also been obvious that we weren't going to save the forests without a political decision.

The safest, long term way to protect forests has always been to turn them into National Parks, but even that could come unstuck in a volatile political climate such as we have at the moment.

We need other factors to make sure that a favourable political decision is permanent. And right now we've got them.

The strongest of these factors is that the international market for native forest woodchips has collapsed. China now has its own plantations coming on stream and no longer needs to import woodchips.

Most Japanese paper manufacturers now want plantation and FSC certified chips, so they no longer buy woodchips from Eden either.

Exports of woodchips from Eden are a tiny fraction of what they were even a few years ago.

Last year, they were (275,793) less than half what they were (540,207) just 4 years ago. Until 15 years ago Eden was regularly exporting over a million tonnes a year.

And this year, we have seen just one woodchip carrier come to Eden in 6 months.

The chipmill owner (ANWE) is losing tens of millions of dollars every year, the operator (Pentarch) also losing tens of millions. And of course the Forestry Corporation and ultimately we as taxpayers are losing tens of millions in fines and subsidies!

In today's unpredictable political climate- if we succeed in getting the GSF NP, a future Government might well want rescind it and make the forests available for logging again, but they would probably be flat out finding anyone willing to do it – even with the massive subsidies on offer.

I'll leave you with that positive thought.