

CHIPMILL PELLETT PLANT SCRAPPED

Greens Councillor, Keith Hughes has confirmed that the controversial wood pellet plant at the Eden chipmill has closed.

Cr Hughes this week received an answer to a question in which he sought information about monitoring conditions of approval for the pellet plant. Official council advice was:

“SEFE has formally advised Council that the Pellet Plant was decommissioned on 19 December 2012 and is not operational at this time.”

The date, 19 December 2012 is coincidentally the same day on which South East Fibre Exports (SEFE) managers took part in a teleconference about the future of the chipmill with Japanese owners, Nippon Paper.

Chipstop Campaign convener, Harriett Swift has welcomed the news.

“The woodchipping industry has been counting on a cash flow from so-called “bio-energy” projects such as the pellet plant to ensure its future,” she said.

“Woodchippers have looked to highly polluting energy from native forest wood to help lift it out of its current dire market situation,” she said.

The pellet plant was the subject of a successful challenge in the Land and Environment Court in December 2011 and was only finally approved after a second referral to the Bega Valley Shire Council.

Ms Swift said that SEFE’s wood fired power station proposal was also withdrawn in November last year and the pellet plant closed in December.

“Without massive subsidies, even bigger than woodchipping has received, plans for an energy led recovery for the native forest logging industry now look like a pipe dream,” she said.

“Although wood pellets have taken off in other parts of the world, they have failed in Australia,” she said.

“This is very good news for our native forests,” she said.

“Without the extra cash flow income that energy production might have provided, the woodchipping industry will be forced to face up to market realities and shut down,” she said.

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21 February 2013