



FORESTS STAND FOR LIFE

INFORMATION PACK

Everything you need to know
about biomass burning
in Australia



Wilderness
Australia

**WITHIN 10 YEARS
FOREST BIOENERGY IS
PREDICTED TO
INCREASE BY NEARLY
300 %
WORLD WIDE**

Forest like this in Barrington Tops is threatened by wood-based bioenergy. Image credit: Henry Gold



THE BURNING ISSUE

What is bioenergy?

Bioenergy describes the use of organic matter for energy generation.

One form of bioenergy that is being increasingly utilised around the world is wood sourced from forests. This wood is pulverized into pellets or briquettes which are then burnt to produce electricity.

Forest-based bioenergy, as this practice is known, is particularly well established in the UK and the EU and is quickly gaining a foothold in Asian countries including Japan and South Korea. Over the next decade, global production of forest biomass energy is predicted to increase nearly 300 percent, having already doubled in the last ten years.

Old-growth forest in the Tarkine is also facing logging if wood-based bioenergy takes off in Australia. Image credit: Kazuki Yamakawa

IN AUSTRALIA BURNING FORESTS IS NOW CLASSIFIED AS 'RENEWABLE ENERGY'



Wood from Australian forestry operations is already fuelling power stations in Australia. Photo credit: Delta Electricity

AUSTRALIA'S FORESTS

In the firing line

In recent years there has been a strong push to significantly scale up the industry in Australia.

In 2015, the Tony Abbott-led Federal government amended the Renewable Energy Act, to recognise native forest bioenergy as renewable energy.

Four years later, the federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment allocated \$1 million towards forest-based bioenergy research.

The energy generator, Delta Electricity, is already using wood from forestry operations to co-fire the Vales Point coal power station on the shores of Lake Macquarie.

There is also a proposal to reopen the Redbank Power Station near the NSW town of Singleton and fuel it with more than one million tonnes of wood from forests per year instead of coal.



**REDBANK POWER STATION
COULD BE FUELED WITH
1 MILLION
TONNES OF WOOD FROM
AUSSIE FORESTS PER YEAR**

Plans are in place to fuel Redbank power station in Singleton with wood. Image credit: Singletonargus.com.au

THE MYTH

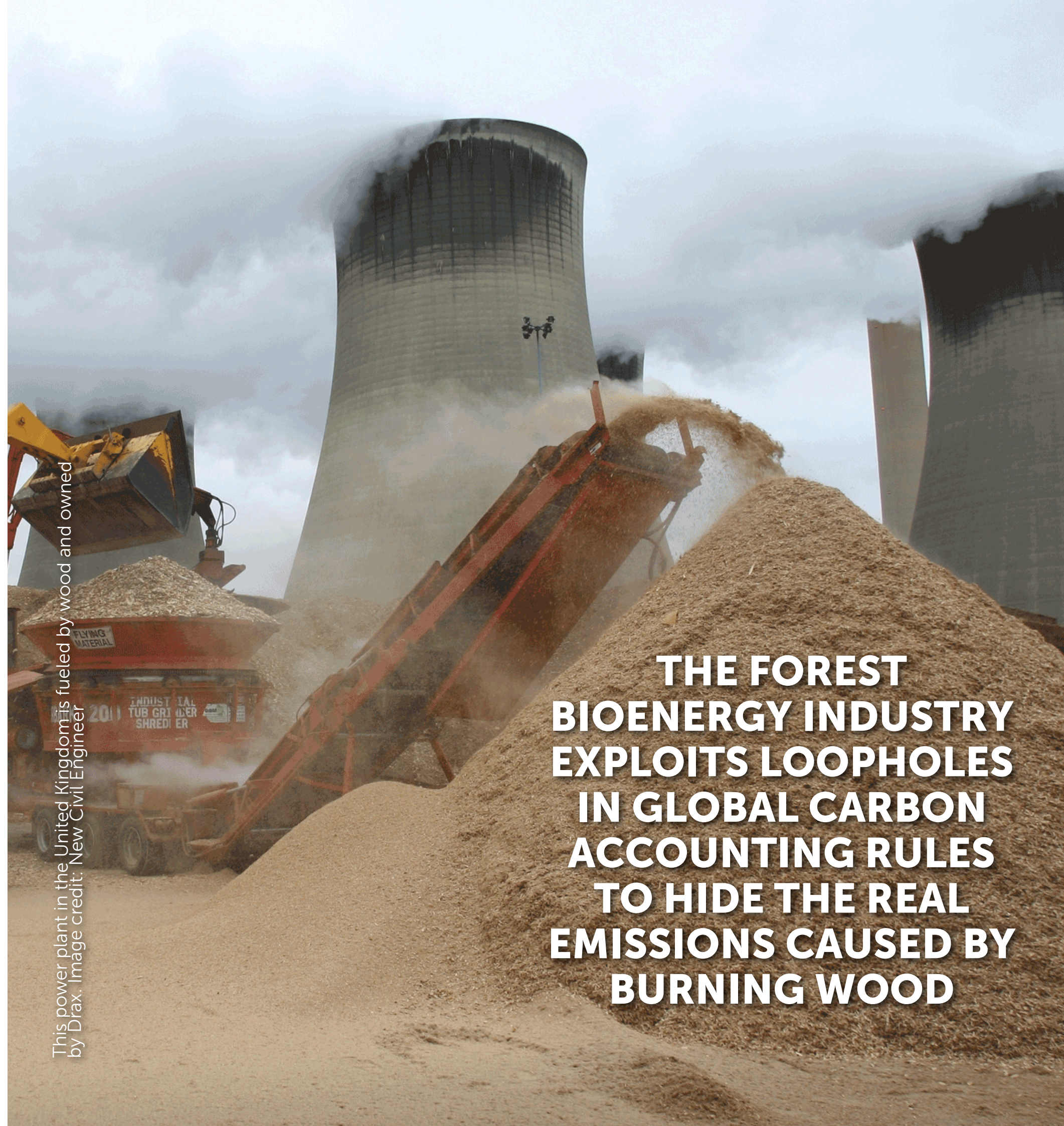
Clean and green?

Forest-based bioenergy is widely – but falsely – seen as a form of “clean” and “renewable” energy. Why?

The forest bioenergy industry exploits loopholes in global carbon accounting rules to hide the real emissions caused by burning wood.

The industry also claims that emissions caused by burning wood are recaptured by replanted forests. They are ignoring the fact that the time it takes to capture carbon by regrowing forests is time we don't have, if we hope to avoid catastrophic climate change.

Even worse, burning wood to generate electricity will offer a lifeline to the environmentally destructive, economically unsustainable native forest logging industry in Australia – the source of around 38 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year.



This power plant in the United Kingdom is fueled by wood and owned by Drax. Image credit: New Civil Engineer

**THE FOREST
BIOENERGY INDUSTRY
EXPLOITS LOOPHOLES
IN GLOBAL CARBON
ACCOUNTING RULES
TO HIDE THE REAL
EMISSIONS CAUSED BY
BURNING WOOD**



THE FACTS

More carbon emissions

Wood bioenergy produces about twice the emissions of carbon per unit of power in comparison to coal.

It also reduces the capacity of our forests to fulfil their most important climate function – sequestering, storing and safely keeping carbon out of the atmosphere for hundreds of years.

Analysis in Tasmania revealed that old growth mountain ash forests can store up to 1,200 tonnes of carbon per hectare but the same forest ecosystem logged on an 80 year rotation contains an average of 400 tonnes of carbon per hectare – a fact the logging industry and its political allies try to conceal.



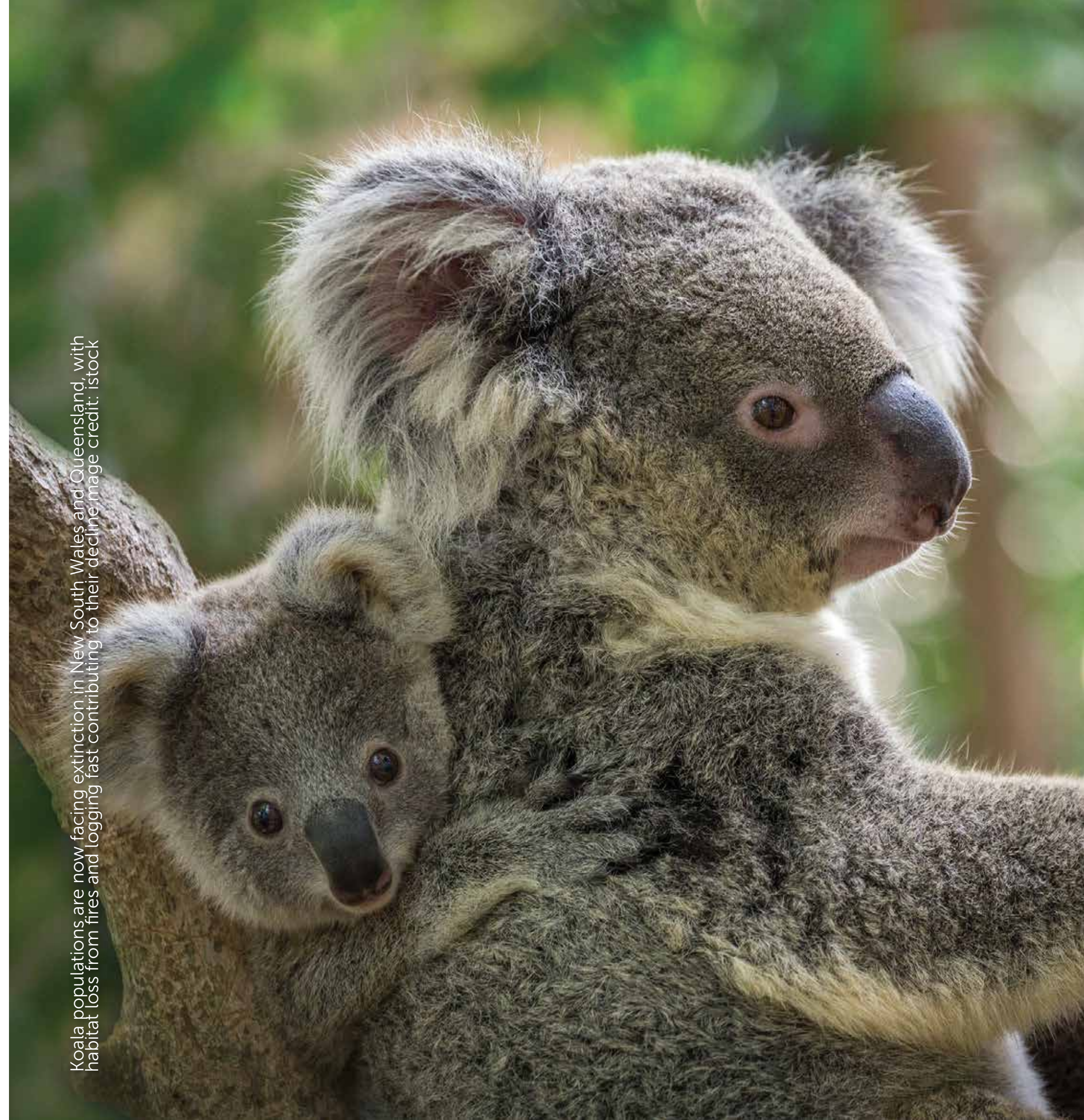
THE FACTS

Worsening the biodiversity crisis

Biomass burning in Australia is not able to occur without broadscale clearfelling operations in native forests.

Native forest logging for wood bioenergy will heighten the threat posed to more than 1,400 forest-dwelling plants and animals that are already listed as threatened species under Australian law.

Following the devastating bushfires of 2019/20, native forests must be allowed to recover and not be burnt for electricity.



Koala populations are now facing extinction in New South Wales and Queensland, with habitat loss from fires and logging fast contributing to their decline. Image credit: iStock

3 BILLION

ANIMALS WERE
KILLED OR HARMED
IN THE BLACK SUMMER
BUSHFIRES OF 2019-2020



THE FACTS

Fueling the bushfire crisis

Logging native forests increases the risk and severity of bushfires, like those of the Black Summer which killed or harmed 3 billion animals in 2019/20.

According to the Bushfire Recovery Project, logging “operations increase the volume of coarse, woody debris, and the density of elevated and vertically oriented live fuels. In addition, by opening up the forest canopy, logging operations alter microclimate conditions, causing drying of soils and fuel, and allowing stronger wind to affect fires on the forest floor.”

Image credit: Matthew Abbott, New York Times.

JOIN THE FIGHT

Pushing back

Globally, governments and major financial institutions are already taking action to limit the growth of forest bioenergy, recognizing that it is neither a “clean” nor an “environmentally-friendly” source of energy.

In 2021, bioenergy giant Drax, the UK’s single largest emitter of carbon dioxide, was booted from the S & P Global Clean Energy Index, a renowned investment index of clean energy companies.

French bioenergy generator, Albioma, which uses wood in its power plants, was also dropped from the index.

Now, we must take action to prevent wood-based bioenergy from taking off in Australia.

Drax is the United Kingdom's single largest emitter of carbon dioxide. Image credit: Friends of the Earth

NOW, WE MUST TAKE
ACTION TO PREVENT
WOOD-BASED
BIOENERGY FROM TAKING
OFF IN AUSTRALIA





JOIN THE FIGHT

Protect Australia's forests now

We know what needs to happen to keep our forests, animals and environment safe.

The federal government must:

1. Exclude native forest biomass as a renewable energy source under the Renewable Energy Act and its successors.
2. Remove all government subsidies for native forest logging.
3. Remove all government funding for timber innovation hubs from the 2022 budget.

The energy retailers must:

1. Publicly rule out sourcing electricity generated by burning any native forest material.
2. Support legislative change to exclude native forest biomass as a renewable energy source.

Australian Mountain Ash is a species of medium-sized to very tall forest tree that is native to Tasmania and Victoria. Image credit: Graham Drew



**WILDERNESS AUSTRALIA
HELPED TO PROTECT OVER
2 MILLION
HECTARES OF WILDERNESS
IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Sunrise at the World Heritage Listed Blue Mountains National Park.
Image credit: Andri Slonchakk

ABOUT US

Wilderness Australia

Wilderness Australia has worked for over fifty years to have Australia's wild places declared as protected areas.

World Heritage sites, national parks, and declared wilderness areas are different types of protected area categories in Australia.

Our proposal for a Wilderness Act was accepted in 1987 and resulted in more than 2,100,000 hectares of protected wilderness in NSW; including many of the intact, wild places bordering Sydney's urban sprawl, which people who share our love of nature can continue to experience today.

We also played a leading role in realising Myles Dunphy's plan for a Greater Blue Mountains National Park, as well as spearheaded the successful campaign for its World Heritage listing.

OUR HISTORY

Wilderness timeline

Formerly the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, Wilderness Australia helped protect over 2 million hectares of wilderness in NSW and sought wilderness management for South West Tasmania, Kakadu, Hinchinbrook Island, Daintree and national parks in Victoria. Yet wilderness can only be kept secure through persistent voluntary effort to support it, as well illustrated by our timeline:

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|------|---|------|---|
| 1931 | Myles Dunphy establishes the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, Australia's first community advocate for wilderness that later became the Colong Committee and the NSW National Parks Association. | 1979 | Stage one Kakadu National Park is protected; stages two and three follow after persistent effort. The park now extends over two million hectares. | 1987 | NSW Parliament passes a Wilderness Act and the Colong Foundation nominates the Nattai Wilderness for assessment. | 1995 | From December 1991 to March 1995 NSW Coalition declares 650,000 hectares of wilderness; Following the March 1995 election, the new Labor Government imposes a logging moratorium over most wilderness areas in NSW. |
| 1968 | May 29, Myles' son Milo Dunphy convenes a meeting of 50 conservation and allied organisations in the Sydney University Great Hall to form the Colong Committee to stop limestone mining in the Kowmung Valley. | 1981 | Stage one Kakadu National Park is placed on the World Heritage list (stages two and three follow in 1987 and 1992). | 1988 | Bushwalking and community conservation groups, including the Colong Foundation, begin to nominate NSW wilderness areas for assessment under the Wilderness Act; the Wet Tropics area of Queensland (including Daintree) is placed on the World Heritage list. | 1996 | Over the next ten years, in conjunction with a major community-based fundraising campaign, the Dunphy Wilderness Fund established in memory of Milo Dunphy, enables the voluntarily acquisition of 77,000 hectares of wilderness. |
| 1972 | Colong Committee resolves to become a national wilderness organisation to campaign for the protection of Lake Pedder, Kakadu and the South East Forests of NSW. | 1982 | Tasmanian Wilderness is added to the World Heritage list (and extended in 1989, 2010, 2012 and 2013). | 1989 | The Colong Foundation publishes Blue Mountains for World Heritage by Dr Geoff Mosley. | 2000 | A million hectares of the Greater Blue Mountains are inscribed on the World Heritage list. |
| 1974 | Mining leases at Mt Colong are added to Kanangra-Boyd National Park. | 1983 | Myles Dunphy becomes the first patron of the Colong Foundation and the Franklin River in Tasmania is saved. | 1990 | The Colong Foundation publishes the Red Index of threatened NSW wilderness areas. | 2011 | From 1995 successive NSW Labor administrations reserve over 1.4 million hectares of wilderness. Just before Labor is swept from office, the Mugii Murum-Ban State Conservation Area is reserved in the Gardens of Stone region. |
| 1975 | The Colong Committee resolves to protect the Border Ranges rainforests and Kakadu. | 1984 | After an eleven-year campaign, 118,000 hectares of the 264,000 hectare NSW rainforest estate are protected. | 1991 | Nattai Wilderness becomes the first area reserved under the NSW Wilderness Act. | 2014 | The Nattai wilderness is increased to 36,000 hectares. |
| 1977 | Konangaroo State Forest is added to Kanangra-Boyd National Park, ending the threat of exotic pine tree plantations on Boyd Plateau. | 1985 | Bob Carr agrees to a NSW Wilderness Act and establishes a Working Group to examine the issue. | 1992 | The National Forest Policy Statement requires the assessment and protection of old growth forests and wilderness. Approximately 840,000 hectares of wilderness in Victoria are protected. | 2021 | The Gardens of Stone is declared as a State Conservation Area, bringing an end to Australia's longest-running conservation campaign. |
| | | 1986 | The Wilderness Working Group identifies 36 wilderness areas and 43 wild rivers in NSW as worthy of reservation; Central Eastern Rainforests are inscribed onto the World Heritage list. | 1994 | The Gardens of Stone National Park in the western Blue Mountains is reserved over pagoda areas unaffected by coal interests. | 2021 | The Colong Foundation changes its name to Wilderness Australia. |
| | | | | 1995 | From December 1991 to March 1995 NSW Coalition declares 650,000 hectares of wilderness; Following the March 1995 election, the new Labor Government imposes a logging moratorium over most wilderness areas in NSW. | | |



Wilderness Australia

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