



North East Forest
Alliance Inc

NORTH EAST FOREST ALLIANCE

DRAFT: NSW's renewable energy plan fatally flawed

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The North East Forest Alliance has described NSW's renewable energy plan as an environmental tragedy due to its intent to fast track the replacement of coal with native forests as fuel for power stations under the pretence that it is renewable energy, when this will increase CO₂ emissions and contribute to the rapidly worsening climate and biodiversity emergencies.

When Matt Kean launched his \$32 billion renewable energy plan in early November it was claimed that the aim was to replace the state's ageing and polluting coal-fired power plants with renewable solar, wind and hydro power, what he didn't say was that the plan apparently includes rebooting some of those coal plants with even more-polluting wood from native forests, said NEFA spokesperson Dailan Pugh

In mid 2021 Hunter Energy [plans to restart](#) the mothballed 151 MW Redbank Power Station, near Singleton in the NSW Hunter Valley, fed by native forests to make it one of world's ten biggest biomass power plants.

“Claims that burning native forests is renewable energy with no net carbon emissions is a dangerous nonsense, as it is even more polluting than coal, releasing up to 50% more CO₂ than coal to generate equivalent amounts of energy.

“To generate this amount of power the 2017 North Coast Residues Report identifies that it requires one million tonnes of biomass to be taken from forests and plantations each year, with 60% of this coming from private forests.

“This is sheer madness as burning this volume will release some 1.8 million tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere each year

“Emissions will be significantly increased by logging operations and trucking of the timber to Singleton.

“We are in a [climate and extinction](#) emergency and need to transition to genuinely renewable energy and reduce atmospheric carbon as soon as possible, this will require retaining every tree we can to take up and store carbon, not increasing logging and clearing to pump more into the atmosphere.

Matt Kean's renewable energy plan is fatally flawed if he allows the burning of biomass as renewable energy, as it will just fuel climate heating, increase droughts, heatwaves and more intense bushfires, while increasing forest degradation and hastening species extinctions.

“When the Government announced its Renewable Energy Plan it included 3 Renewable Energy Zones, though a few days later, after it introduced its Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill 2020 into Parliament they moved their own amendment on the 11/11/20 to include a fourth Hunter renewable energy zone. A deal had been done.

“The next day Hunter Energy sought Expressions of Interest to supply the mothballed Redbank Power Station, near Singleton in the NSW Hunter Valley, with biomass from up to 400km away. That covers an area from past Grafton in the north, to past Moruya in the south, and west to Nyngan, Condobolin and Moree.

“Since then Matt Kean has failed to respond to NEFA’s inquiries whether the Redbank Power Station is included in his Renewable Energy Plan. Apparently it is.

“This means it is likely to receive Government funding and that the Government will “cut red tape” to speed up its approval.

“This Government has changed the rules to allow the burning of native forests for electricity, changed the rules to increase land clearing, and recently changed the logging rules for State Forests and private forests to halve the number of trees that need to be retained, while zoning 140,000 hectares of public coastal forests from Grafton to Taree for clearfelling.

“Establishing a market for small and defective trees will facilitate the increased logging intensity and encourage more land clearing.

“The community needs to urgently speak up to stop the NSW Government from allowing this environmental disaster” Mr. Pugh said.

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