

Dear NSW Government

Verdant Energy are attempting to revive their Redbank biomass energy project by proposing to burn native forest from habitat clearing on private land.

The restart of the Redbank Power station to burn our trees is a dreadful idea. Logging and destroying our trees will contribute to increased climate change because this burning pollutes our air and decimates trees that are carbon capturers and an answer to address climate change.

NSW already has an abysmal track record of unrestrained habitat clearing. **Habitat clearing on freehold land is now the biggest cause of environmental loss in NSW.** This is unacceptable. **This proposal will make the problem exponentially worse** as Verdant want to burn **850,000 tonnes of habitat and woodchips per year** – more than the entire native forest logging industry in NSW produces.

I am deeply and strongly opposed to the restart of the Redbank Power station in Singleton Shire because-

1. The new proposed fuel source for Redbank power station will create a market to destroy even more habitat. Our Koala and Greater Glider as well as many bird species are at a tipping point in NSW and will not sustain this ongoing destruction of their habitat. They lose their habitat, they die!
2. This project is an unnecessary distraction from real renewable energy solutions. It will not help, but hinder decarbonisation of the energy system. This is an outdated practice and does not support the federal government's Climate Bill.
3. Our forests should **not** be counted as renewable resources as they take hundreds of years to renew. So, defining the biomass industry as a source of renewable energy is incorrect when it destroys our forests. We must protect our precious native forests public and on private land, and unique forest biodiversity from biomass burning and prevent a huge new source of climate emissions thereby protecting Australia's climate and reducing the threat of natural disasters from drought, fire, and flood. Reducing climate emissions will protect nature, wildlife, and our communities from ever increasing natural disasters. The state government only needs to recall the financial loss to the local communities and to the NSW government during and after the catastrophic NSW bushfires 2019-2020 and extreme floods that occurred a few years later. The climate is changing rapidly, so the **NSW state government is obliged and responsible for the safety of all NSW residents by protecting them from natural disasters caused by projects that contribute to more climate change and natural disasters.** The **NSW government have a moral and ethical responsibility.** So, by approving projects such as the revival of Redbank by Verdant Energy this will exacerbate climate change and will be costly to the government, firstly by providing more financial support for residents significantly impacted by increasing natural disasters, whereby they have lost their homes and livelihood. Many residents are looking to the government to protect them in proper decision-making. Secondly, if the NSW government chooses to approve the revival of Redbank that would constitute a poor decision, this could then pave the way for possible litigation. Especially when the NSW government have been advised by scientists and universities that this would be the wrong course to follow.
4. Burning cleared vegetation is not carbon neutral and the project would create a new source of greenhouse pollution. The Smart Energy Council does not support biomass from native forests whether that is on private or public land. Using native forests materials as biomass fuel will make climate change significantly worse by releasing much of this carbon back into the atmosphere as a greenhouse gas. In fact, per unit of energy generated, **biomass burning from native forests wherever they are, emits more greenhouse gas than coal.** It doesn't make sense to claim that logging any forest older than 30 years can recover lost carbon by 2050. Biomass burning does not support the recently passed **Federal Climate Change Bill** in its emission targets. Yet the NSW government supports the biomass industry. So, state governments are not working with the National Climate Change Bill.

Griffith University comments that “**forest biomass burning for energy comes with grave risks of highly perverse outcomes, including increased CO2 emissions... A rethink of the role of forest biomass burning for energy in national decarbonization policy is therefore urgently needed. There is growing body of scientific evidence that burning forest biomass for energy will greatly increase the amount of carbon in the atmosphere for decades and have harmful impacts on forest integrity.**” (Holtmark 2013, Ter-Mikaelian et al. 2015, Searchinger et al. 2018).

5. The proposal is to use cleared habitat and forest biomass from land that has been stripped for farming, not regrowth, meaning there will not be **any** future carbon sequestration to theoretically reduce the power plant's emissions.
6. A massive increase in truck movements will also be involved to deliver fuel to Redbank is another source of emissions and a far-reaching disturbance producing more air and noise pollution and affecting the health of local communities.
7. The proposal seeks to **exploit NSW land management rules** that are unequivocally failing nature and that are currently under review. Nature is declining. This is NOT the time to be investing in biomass energy.
8. Biomass has negative and unjust health impacts including releasing dangerous air pollution affecting people's health and worsening effects for those with pre-existing conditions such as allergies and asthmatics.
9. ***This university research says the forest biomass industry will increase carbon emissions, negatively impact forest ecosystem integrity, and have consequences for the conservation of forest-dependent biodiversity. The Minns government are urged to consider the negative impacts for biodiversity, especially as they were voted in on stronger habitat protections.***
10. The Federal Government have clear climate goals, environmental and biodiversity goals to improve nature, repair and stop the trajectory of decline of our landscape and wildlife. The Biomass industry destroys the environment; hence the biomass industry is NOT compatible with the federal government's goals, and if the state government approves this project this also shows that the NSW Labor government is opposed to the federal government's goals as well.

This project will degrade environmental values, worsen climate change, affect people's health, and hasten the decline of native wildlife. We as a community need nature for our own health. **Losing 850,000 tonnes of habitat and woodchips per year will cost nature incredibly and us. This is a reckless proposal with no merit except to burn vital species habitat on private land for energy.**

I am strongly opposed to this project by Verdant Energy who are attempting to revive their Redbank biomass energy project by proposing to burn native forest from habitat clearing on private land. **Verdant Energy are doing whatever they can to progress their selfish desire to open this contentious biomass energy project.**

The NSW government is strongly urged to see the **negative ramifications** of burning native forest from habitat cleared on private land. The results will still be the same worsening effects for the climate, increased emissions that contradict Australia's Climate Bill, increased natural disasters and severity, increased health issues for communities as well as further biodiversity loss because of habitat destruction.

The Redbank biomass energy project must be rejected.

Yours sincerely

Janice Haviland