



COMMUNICATIONS BRANCH

Level 1, 117 Great Eastern Highway
RIVERVALE 6103

Phone: (08) 9475 8888

Fax: (08) 9475 8899

Email: jonathan.smith@fpc.wa.gov.au

Media statement

Grave concerns for Chester ecosystems, surrounding life and property

13 February 2009

The Forest Products Commission (FPC) today has expressed growing concern at the activities of the Chester Forest Action Group (CFAG), which is actually doing more harm than good through damage to the areas ecosystem.

Of major concern to the FPC, and no doubt surrounding communities and bushfire management professionals, is the lighting of campfires in and around the protest site.

FPC General Manager Dr Paul Biggs described the actions of the CFAG as irresponsible, particularly at a time when the nation is suffering the affects of major bushfires.

“By openly lighting campfires during the tinderbox conditions of summer, the CFAG is threatening life and property and the environment.”

“The impact to the Chester ecosystem and surrounding communities should one of these fires get out of control would be devastating, taking significantly longer for the area to recover when compared with the practical, science-based forestry methods employed to protect and restore forest ecosystems before, during and after harvesting.”

Dr Biggs said “It’s difficult to understand why people who claim to be concerned about issues such as dieback practise environmentally damaging activities such as digging holes and moving soil around.”

Phytophthora dieback is a devastating plant disease of native plants, horticultural crops and garden plants worldwide. The introduction of the disease into Australia and particularly south-west Western Australia (WA) is a biological disaster of global significance.

According to the Dieback Consultative Council, over 40% (2,300) of the native plant species and half of the endangered plant species in the south-west of WA are susceptible.

It has been estimated that Phytophthora dieback will cost the Australian economy at least \$1.6 billion over the next ten years.

The group has also openly prevented and hindered the conduct of ongoing scientific work, being undertaken to assess the proposed harvesting areas’ conservation value.

For more information contact:
JONATHAN SMITH
COMMUNICATIONS BRANCH
Phone: 9475 8888 or 0408 944 760