

## Conservation group pushes Bega timber hub decision to court, again

24 September 2021

A conservation group has again taken the decision to approve the construction of a south coast hi-tech timber optimisation hub to court in the hopes the move will be overturned. Source: The Chronicle.

Bega Valley Shire Council has approved a development application for the hub from Allied Natural Wood Enterprises, previously known as Allied Natural Wood Exports, as part of the company's \$14.5 million plan to remain sustainable following the Black Summer bushfires.

Earlier this year, south coast conservation group South East Forest Rescue took last year's decision by Bega Valley Shire Council to approve the hub to the NSW Land and Environment Court, with the court ruling in August that the original development consent process by the council in 2020 was "invalid, void and of no force and effect"

The court found approval was made under staff delegation and gave the council until 15 September to correct the process.

The day before the deadline, councillors voted to approve the construction of a log sorter, sawmill, pallet plant and briquette plant, four votes to three.

The move saw the conservation group take further action in the court this week.

The council's director of community, environment and planning, Alice Howe, said the case would now be heard at a hearing on November 3 and 4.

"The court hearing today related to a further action brought by South East Forest Rescue challenging the consent issues by council on 14 September for a timber optimisation hub at Eden on the same grounds as the former challenge," she said on Thursday.

The hub, which will be located at the existing woodchip mill near Eden, will also be managed by Pentarch Forestry.

Pentarch Forestry chief executive officer Paul Heubner said earlier this year, the hub would help make the business more sustainable.

The company said the new development would create 50 construction jobs and 20 operational jobs.

A spokesman for the conservation group said the environmental impacts of logging native forests in the Eden region including any increased bushfire risk from the operations haven't been taken into account.

"Eighty per cent of the loggable state forest in the region was burned, and we have a long recovery still underway," the spokesman said.

The woodchip mill currently processes up to 650,000 tonnes of timber per annum and is regulated by the EPA under an Environment Protection Licence.

The Border fire, which destroyed homes and infrastructure on the far south coast, also destroyed millions of dollars' worth of infrastructure and stock at the Twofold Bay mill facility.

Almost three quarters of the 160,000 hectares of state forest in the region was impacted by the Black Summer bushfires.

Source:<https://www.timberbiz.com.au/conservation-group-pushes-bega-timber-hub-decision-to-court-again/>