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Global focus on forests highlights the need to protect, not burn Australia's forests for power

The United Nation's launch of the International Year of Forests on Feb 2nd, will help highlight the plight the world's forests, including Australia's native forests.

"The clearing and logging of Australia's native forests continues despite the urgent need to protect all of the world's forests to avoid dangerous climate change" said Lorraine Bower, spokesperson for the Australian Forests and Climate Alliance.

"It is globally recognised that protecting forests is the cheapest, easiest and quickest way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, yet the Australian Government continues to allow the logging and clearing of these valuable carbon stores at an astonishing rate" said Lorraine Bower.

"Large areas of Australia's remaining forests are unprotected and available for logging and clearing. A majority of the wood sourced from logging public forests ends up as woodchips for paper production in Japan" said Jill Redwood, convenor of Environment East Gippsland.

Recent studies have shown that the tall mountain ash forests of south-eastern Australia store more carbon per hectare than any other forests on the planet. Forest destruction is responsible for almost 20% of our greenhouse gas emissions, more than the entire transport and industry sectors combined.

"It is beyond belief that in the International Year of Forests, the Australian governments are supporting moves to start burning native forests for produce power instead of taking the steps to protect these valuable natural ecosystems. It is shameful that Australia's forests will continue to be cleared and logged in the International Year of the Forests. " said Jill Redwood.

The Australian Forests and Climate Alliance will run a public campaign in 2011 to convince the government to protect Australia's native forests, and to rule out the burning of native forests for power generation.

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