

Media Release - June 7, 2011

South East Region Conservation Alliance Inc.
www.serca.org.au/naturalforests

Natural Forests – Australia’s wilderness coast

Meyer Gallery
269 Bourke Street Darlinghurst NSW 2010
02 9380 8014
Opening 6 -8pm Thursday, June 16, 2011
Closes 30 June 2011.

A timely exhibition to start in Sydney this month will look at both the beauty of Australia’s south eastern native forests, as well as the destruction to the forests from continued logging for woodchips bound for the Asian market.

Six of Australia’s most prominent photographers have banded together to photograph the forests, from Bateman’s Bay in NSW to East Gippsland in Victoria.

The project also celebrates the UN International Year of the Forest 2011.

The exhibition, Natural Forests – Australia’s wilderness coast, is a project of former fashion businesswoman, and now respected artist and climate-change activist Prue Acton.

Prue Acton, Richard Green, Robyn Parker MP and Akira Isogawa will be opening the exhibition.

Ms Acton says with the habitat of near extinct NSW South Coast koalas about to be logged at Bermagui and with the debate about climate change taking an ugly turn with threats against climate scientists, the exhibition is a stark reminder of how important Australia’s native forests are to biodiversity and climate change.

Ms Acton says the exhibition will be an important visual contribution to the national debate.

“Art and ecology are natural bedfellows - art may not be able to change the world, but it can remind the world of what we stand to lose, and also of what is still ours if we can only move away from unsustainable and destructive industries such as native forest logging”.

“The native forestry sector is dead, just as whaling and sealing industries are and I hope that this exhibition will inspire Australians in a way that has not been done since the Franklin Dam campaign.”

Ms Acton added that Australians needed to move away from the 18th Century mental picture of the lone axe man clearing the land for his family, with civilization marching forward, as depicted in images such as Tom Roberts’ and Frederick McCubbin paintings of the clearing between Melbourne and the Dandenong Ranges.

“The reality is that 21st century industrial-scale logging is highly mechanised clear-felling, with 90 per cent of forests logged in the South East of NSW turned into woodchips and sold at bargain basement prices to Asia,” said Ms Acton.

Prue congratulated the exhibition photographers on a remarkable body of work that would have a major impact on Australians at this important time in history.

"I was inspired by Peter Dombrovkis' photograph, "River Bend", which is credited with helping save the Franklin River.

An email to photographer Richard Green resulted in him taking an unforgettable panorama of the South East forests."Ms Acton said the exhibition had been funded through sales of cards and prints of Richard Green's image.

Ms Acton said the Director of the Australian National Museum Andrew Sayer would be in Bermagui on the Far South Coast of NSW to open the exhibition on Thursday June 9.

She said the exhibition would then move to the Meyer Gallery, Darlinghurst starting at 6.00pm 16 June where Richard Green and Prue Acton will be speaking. The photographers will talk about their work in Sydney on Sunday 19 June at 3pm.

View at: www.serca.org.au/naturalforests

Photographers-

- Rob Blakers, whose Tasmanian photos have brought the world's attention to the logging of ancient forests in Tasmania and now to the southeast mainland.
- Heide Smith, featuring intimate wildlife and portraits of local Aboriginal and other locals fighting against the logging of critical koala territory and traditional lands mainly destined for the Nippon Paper chip mill at Eden.
- Gordon Undy, with his black and white, silver gelatin prints.
- Judith Deland's After Sterilization. Forest Silent. and others presented in last year's successful legal battle to save ancient trees and habitat in East Gippsland.
- John Reid from ANU School of Art & Fenner School of Environment & Society, photographed mangroves, rocky outcrops and the forest canopy at night.
- Richard Green added more helicopter panoramas and
- Wesley Stacey, master photographer, who set the card making project going is exhibiting Murrah River - Corridor of the Kooris, a black and white panorama.

See the beauty and vulnerability of the southeast forests of NSW, go to www.serca.org.au

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