



MEDIA RELEASE: POWERFUL POLITICAL STATEMENT BY AUSTRALIA'S LEADING PHOTOGRAPHERS Prue Acton Richard Green 07.08.2011

A powerful photographic exhibition which chronicles the beauty of Australia's south east forests and the continuing tragedy of the total devastation of these forests for the benefit of shareholders and executives of Japan's Nippon Paper company, has been put together by Australia's adventure photographer Richard Green and businesswoman and high-profile conservationist Prue Acton.

The exhibition, Natural Forests – Australia's Wilderness Coast, which features the work of Richard Green and a number of other leading Australian photographers, including Heide Smith, Gordon Undy, Judith Deland, Wesley Stacey, John Reid and Rob Blakers, opens at 6pm on the 5th of August at the Australian National University's School of Art Foyer Gallery and runs from 2-20th of August.

Prue Acton said the public may not be aware that public, or state forests as they are known, along the south coast of NSW and into Victoria that are not protected by national park status - are continuing to be logged at an alarming rate to meet quotas for the woodchip mill at Eden, which is owned by Japan's Nippon company.

"This exhibition is a political statement. We want the lead image, the panorama shot taken of the coastal forest between Bermagui and Bega, by Richard Green, to be important visually in the fight against woodchipping and deforestation. Much of the forest in the photograph is set to be logged over the next six months.

"The NSW Government has confirmed that 90 per cent of all the trees destroyed in the beautiful public native forests, which are home to animals such as koalas, potoroos and gliders, go straight to the woodchip mill to be sold at bargain basement prices to Asia."

"There is no end to the terrible lengths this industry will go to – they prop up the workers, that is, the logging contractors, giving them false hope their industry is sustainable – when it is clearly not.

"The move to end native logging in Tasmania is welcome, but if the public think this is the only part of Australia where our native wildlife, our biodiversity and our heritage is being destroyed by the people they elect to govern, and the big business they are involved with, then they are sorely mistaken – and saying I didn't know, is not an excuse.

"Last week logging started amongst Bermagui's "Cathedral of Trees", that is, the beautiful spotted gum forest canopy, so endearing on the entrance to the town. NSW Forests had promised the people of Bermagui that these highly valued spotted gums would remain intact. These trees will now be woodchips being loaded up on a ship bound for Asia.

Ms Acton said the forests between Bega and Bermagui also contains the last remnant koala population on the Far South Coast. She said it had been hoped the 30 to 50 koalas, only recently found, could be the start of a recovery in the area, but she said continual logging in these forests over the last two years was ensuring the koala population would be finally destroyed.

"While in Canberra it is easy to forget what is happening outside the ACT this photographic exhibition will remind everyone that the beauty is still there, but unless logging native forests is ended, it won't be for long. And that will be the legacy we leave our children and their children. Many people don't realise that record levels of woodchipping are going on, virtually on Canberra's doorstep on the south coast. Even if native forest logging ends in Tasmania, it will continue on the south coast unless people act now to stop it."

Image: Forest Connections multi-stitched images coastal forests panorama from Bega River mouth, Mumbulla Mountain and Gulaga Mountains by Richard Green for United Nations International Year of the Forests 2011.

www.serca.org.au/forestconnections

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