

Letter from M Ward, OfficeWorks in response to Lois Katz' letter to him and her response to him 25th May 2011

From: mward@officeworks.com.au
To: dankatz83@hotmail.com
Subject: Thank you for your email regarding Australian Paper
Date: Wed, 25 May 2011 08:39:32 +0000

Thank you for taking the time to write to me and voice your concerns about the harvesting of native Australian timber to make paper. This matter was first brought to our attention by The Wilderness Society late last year and since that time, we've been actively engaged with a range of stakeholders to better understand the situation, and I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on our position.

Since The Wilderness Society first brought their concerns to our attention we have been:

- Visiting the Toolangi State Forests and receiving an introduction to, and tour of, aspects of Vic Forests operations with Australian Paper; and a presentation and discussion with Professor David Lindenmayer and a tour of other VicForests operations with The Wilderness Society.
- Researching and evaluating substantial amounts of information supplied by a range of stakeholders including The Wilderness Society.
- Actively facilitated stakeholder meetings with The Wilderness Society, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Australian Paper and the CFMEU Forestry Division, as well as proactively engaging with numerous other stakeholders on the issue.
- Significantly reduced the retail price of recycled paper at our cost, to bridge the price gap between that and non recycled paper in an effort to make environmentally preferable choices more affordable.
- Requested that Australian Paper identify a strategy, with transparent applicable timelines, to reduce their reliance on native timber including, but not limited to, undertaking comprehensive due diligence on the viability of using plantation timber to meet more or all of their production requirements.

As a result of our investigations, we have reached a view which I believe we all share - that where a viable alternative to native forest harvesting exists it should be used.

In light of that, we've made a commitment to work with multiple parties to explore alternative sources in order to reduce the industry's reliance on native timber. We have sought Australian Paper's support in achieving our goals and we are, and will remain, in active discussions with them. While we are resolute in

our commitment, we are also firmly of the view that a meaningful transition will take time.

Your Ethical Paper campaign calls upon us to stop selling Reflex paper. As you know Reflex is only one of numerous product sourced from Victorian native forests and sold by multiple resellers. While we have given the request careful consideration we have therefore concluded that ceasing the sale of Reflex in our stores, of itself, does not assist in achieving a lasting solution.

To that end, we are optimistic that a meaningful, long-term solution for viable alternatives to native forest harvesting can be achieved if all parties work together constructively. Therefore, we are supportive of the recently formed roundtable working group to make this happen and we encourage all interested parties to participate in that process.

In addition to our ongoing work with Australian Paper and other stakeholders on the Victorian forest matter, Officeworks will continue with the implementation of our Forest Products Procurement policy across all aspects of our operations because our intentions in this arena are genuine. The policy was introduced in conjunction with the launch of our Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, Taking Care, early last year. Whilst we are the first to admit we have a long way to go, we are determined to stay the course and achieve our ultimate objective.

In the meantime, all the products supplied to us by Australian Paper are third party certified to the highest available standards for paper sourcing and manufacturing.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to communicate your concerns to us and I look forward to working constructively to achieve our shared aim.

Regards

Mark Ward
Managing Director

Subject: [SERCA] RE: Thank you for your email regarding Australian Paper
Reply-To: dankatz83@hotmail.com

Dear Mark,

I appreciate hearing back from you regarding the harvesting of Australian native trees to be cut down in order to be made into paper. As you know, climate change is coming faster than expected and our carbon storing native trees are one of our best weapons to fight it.

Everyday that your company delays in changing from its source of our Australian native forest timber causes 1,000's more of our precious native forest trees to be logged.

This is a terrible legacy that you will be leaving our children. Fast action is needed to save our what is left of our native forests. Please do not get caught up in the bureaucratic web, bogged down by endless meetings where committees and working parties are formed to no avail.

Please remember, there is no personal monetary gain in the work that we environmentalists are doing. We are only involved because we hope that reason will prevail and we can leave something beautiful and healthy for the next generation. Our work can be very stressful and costly to us. Sometimes, we wish that we didn't care so much. Our lives would be a lot easier.

However, the fact is, we do care very much and are hoping to alert the rest of society about the need to protect our forests for the benefit of all.

Kind regards,

Lois Katz