

From the Forest and Climate meeting held at ANU 29–30 Jan. 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

31 JANUARY, 2009

FORESTS THE NEW FRONT FOR CLIMATE SOLUTION: AUSTRALIAN FOREST AND CLIMATE ALLIANCE

Over seventy representatives from forest groups around Australia have met in Canberra, forming the Australian Forest and Climate Alliance (AFCA) and calling for federal leadership on forest protection to mitigate climate change.

Peak environment groups, local and regional forest protection groups, young people and NGOs are calling on the Rudd Government to secure Australia's climate future by protecting native forests from logging, woodchipping and burning.

“Malcolm Turnbull has finally recognised this week that the way we manage our landscape is vital for solving climate change. On this the Opposition are a step ahead of the Rudd government – yet both parties fail to seize the opportunity to take quick and effective climate action by protecting Australia's native forests,” said Jael Johnson, spokesperson for AFCA.

“Forest protection is the missing link in credible Australian climate change policies”, continued Ms Johnson. “Logging and clearing native forests releases dangerous carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, causing climate change.”

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AFCA calls for the scrapping of national proposals to burn native forests for power that are under consideration by COAG.

“Burning native forests for power generation is another ridiculous proposal cooked up by a logging industry desperate for alternative markets for woodchips”, said Prue Acton, spokesperson for South-East Region Conservation Alliance, AFCA member. “Native forest furnaces are bad for climate, bad for wildlife and must be rejected by government, energy retailers and consumers.”

“While we need to urgently reduce emissions from burning fossil fuels, protecting natural carbon stored in forests and woodlands

and stopping emissions from logging is critical,” said Warrick Jordon, spokesperson for the Huon Valley Environment Centre, AFCA member.

Stopping the destruction of natural carbon stores is essential for mitigating climate change and will also protect biodiversity, water and natural ecosystems.

The Australian Forest and Climate Alliance will contribute to the National Climate Summit in Canberra 31 Jan – 3 Feb. AFCA policy principles are available.

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