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DESTRUCTION OF TASMANIA'S ANCIENT FORESTS.

Today the international community is showing that the whole world is watching the destruction of Tasmania's ancient forests. Activists around the world are calling for world heritage protection for these threatened forests.

England, Ireland and Switzerland took part in autonomous actions world wide with banners reading "Tasmania's Ancient Forests-world heritage not woodchips" and "The whole world is watching".

At Parliament house in Canberra this morning conservationists from around Australia gathered for a mock funeral for Australia's native forests. Two conservationists abseiled down the facade and unfurled a banner stating "Tasmania's Ancient Forests-world heritage not woodchips"

There has been an unanimous decision of 21 countries to extend existing world heritage borders to include ancient forests located in the Upper Florentine, Styx valleys and Lower Weld Valley and Middle Huon. These forests are currently threatened or being devastated by industrial scale clear felling.

"Gunns Ltd, Forestry Tasmania and the Australian Federal Government continue to destroy Tasmania's unique ancient forests. Despite the unanimous IUCN decision and the World Heritage Committee's recommendations on extending current world heritage borders, industrial scale logging continues in these areas," said media spokesperson Lisa Stone.

"Through today's action, the international community is calling for the Australian government to act now on these recommendations and protect the Upper Florentine, Styx, Lower Weld Valleys and the Middle Huon forests of Tasmania."

"Today's action highlights the need for the Australian Government to fulfil it's international obligations on climate change by protecting it's remaining carbon sinks."

This action draws attention to the fact that human induced climate change is the greatest threat to life on earth today. A recent report by Professor Brendan Mackey(1.) states Tasmania's ancient forests store on average around two thousand tonnes of carbon per hectare. Making Tasmania's ancient forests some of the most carbon dense forests in the world. The protection of Tasmania's Ancient forests is of urgent international importance in times of global climate chaos.

"Today we are holding a funeral for our forests but we will be holding a funeral for our planet if industrial logging is allowed to continue."

"We are sending a clear message to the Rudd government that the whole world is watching. The international community is speaking out to demand world heritage not woodchips for Tasmania's threatened ancient forests."

1. Mackey B, Keith H, Lindenmayer D, Berry S, "Green Carbon: The Role of Natural Forests in Carbon Storage, Part 1, A green carbon account of Australia's south-eastern Eucalypt forest, and policy implications" ANU E Press, 2008, ISBN 9781921313875. Online version available at: http://epress.anu.edu.au/green_carbon_citation.html

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