

## **Media Release: South East Region Conservation Alliance Inc.**

[www.serca.org.au/naturalforests](http://www.serca.org.au/naturalforests)

### **Natural Forests – Australia’s wilderness coast**

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 Bermagui in NSW to East Gippsland in Victoria. The exhibition, Natural Forests – Australia’s wilderness coast, is the brain-child of former fashion businesswoman, and now respected artist and climate-change activist Prue Acton.

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 death threats against climate scientists, the exhibition is a stark reminder of how important Australia’s native forests are to biodiversity and climate change.

She 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 says 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’ paintings from the Dandenong Ranges near Melbourne.

“The reality is the 21st century industrial scale logging is virtually 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.

She 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 and then on to Canberra 5 August at the School of Art.

**Inquiries:**

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Natural Forests – Australia's wilderness coast is an initiative of South East Region Conservation Alliance Inc (SERCA) arts and business communities, celebrating UN International Year of the Forest 2011.

View at: [www.serca.org.au/naturalforests](http://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, whose 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 gelatine 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 Murrumbidgee River - Corridor of the Kooris, a black and white panorama.

The exhibition at Bermagui opening on 9 June, will also show local photographers including: Chris Polglase, Jimmy Zero, Roger Stuart, Prem Samira, Tim Moorhead, Tony Millard, Peter Cotton and Tony Whan. Guy Reeves from Canberra and Adam Knott, The Australian's photographer have also contributed.

A selection from the Bermagui Historical Society will also be shown.

#### Exhibition details:

1. Bermagui Community Centre: 5pm Photographers Talk, Opening 6pm 9 June by Andrew Sayers AM, Director National Museum of Australia. The exhibition which is open 10.30am - 3.30pm closes Mon 13 June.
2. Sydney: Meyer Gallery, Darlinghurst opening 6pm Thurs 16 June 2011 with Richard Green and Prue Acton speaking. Photographers Talk is at 3.00pm Sun 19 June. The exhibition closes Thurs 30 June. The gallery is open Tues-Sun 12noon-5pm.
3. Canberra: ANU School of Art Foyer Gallery opening 6pm Fri 5 August 2011 with Ceramics Workshop Material Matters II Tues-Fri 10.30-5pm Sat 12-5pm and closes Sun 28 August.
4. Bodalla: Gallery Bodalla opening 3pm Sat 5 November 2011, closes Sun 4 December

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