

Over 70 Actions Across 15 Countries in 24 Hours for Tasmania's Forests

An incredible show of world wide support saw over 70 actions across 15 countries in 24 hours calling for an end to the destruction of Tasmania's forests.

People gathered to hold banners in snow filled streets, images of the forest were projected onto town buildings, handmade signs were held up in backyards, some stood as silent statues dressed in green, while some took the action to their local area of forest destruction in solidarity and others asked passers-by to 'have a heart for Tassie's forests.'

In Hobart a massive 40 meter banner was held up outside Ta Ann's head office, in Tokyo a letter was delivered to SMKC (partner to Ta Ann) and a pair of daring conservationists' abseiled the Black Mountain Tower in Canberra to unfurl the message on a giant banner.

This global effort builds on ongoing action of conservationist Miranda Gibson, who has spent 63 days so far at the top of an old growth tree in Tasmania's threatened forest. Ms Gibson's commitment to remain in the tree until the forest is protected has inspired people right across the globe. Miranda beamed the message of forest protection straight from the trees to the world, using Skype to speak at the actions and taking part in a press conference via video link up.

Despite being promised protection by the Tasmanian State and Australian Federal governments back in August 2011 the forests continue to fall. The government broke their promise of an "immediate conservation agreement" across 430,000 hectares of high conservation value forest across Tasmania. Instead the logging continues in order to supply wood to Malaysian company Ta Ann.

"It is an international disgrace that the Australian government promised the protection of these forests six months ago now. Yet due to the Ta Ann's insatiable appetite for native forests, logging has actually increased in the areas that are ear-marked for forest reserves" said Miranda Gibson.

"Today's action sends a clear message to Ta Ann and their corporate customers that the international community will not tolerate the destruction of these globally significant forests. We are asking Ta Ann's customers including flooring manufacturers Panasonic and Eidai and Japan's largest home building companies Seksui House, Daiwa House to cease purchasing from Ta Ann while the company is driving the logging of Tasmania's native forests" said Ms Gibson.

The veneer produced by Ta Ann from Tasmania's forests is misleadingly sold around the world as "eco" friendly. The company has told its international customers that the wood is sourced from plantations. And locally they claim to use only 'regrowth' forests. However, the Huon Valley Environment Centre released a report last year that detailed evidence of Ta Ann's use of high conservation value and old growth forest. In addition the government initiated independent assessment of Forestry Tasmania's data proved that Ta Ann is the major driver behind the continued logging of high conservation value forests. The report produced from the independent assessment showed that the majority of coupes scheduled within the area ear-marked for protection are being logged to supply Ta Ann.

"A long term vision that gives Tasmania a unique reserve system, protection for endangered species habitat and taking real action to mitigate climate change is what we are standing up for. With people around the globe and around Australia, we are calling for the protection for these treasure houses of species," Huon Valley Environment Centre's Jenny Weber said.

With UK company International Plywood cancelling their contract a few months ago after being given evidence of Ta Ann's forest destruction, the campaign is now gaining global support in calling on the Japanese corporate customers of Ta Ann to do the same unless Ta Ann cease destroying native forests. A letter will be sent to those companies with that message and details of the global action. There is also a cyber action up and running, for people to sign a letter to be emailed to those companies, just go to: www.taann.com.au

Miranda Gibson continues her tree top vigil in the forests, with new inspiration and enthusiasm from the past 24 hours of action. "It has been inspiring to have such an overwhelming level of support and actions right across the globe" said Ms Gibson. "I hope my ongoing presence in the forests will continue to inspire people to take action and keep this campaign going until we achieve the conservation outcomes that are so desperately needed for these forests to survive into the future."

Miranda's tree sit, equipped with solar panels and internet, is bringing the forests straight from southern Tasmania to you. Check out her daily on line blog: www.observertree.org

Check out photos from the around the world:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/76527681@N03/sets/72157629320724403/>