



Media Release

Say NO to the environmental mafia - (18/08/10)

The Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) is an organisation with members who are focused on improving the management of forests in Australia and internationally. Many of our members have worked alongside or within Environmental Non-Government Organisations (ENGOS) to achieve sustainable solutions to forestry issues throughout the world. Some members have also worked under oppressive regimes where the threat of violence and intimidation are the rule, but solutions have still been achieved.

Members of the IFA Tasmanian Division last week were informed that the current forest industry/ENGO discussions in Tasmania have involved tactics that mirror those of the most oppressive regimes. They were advised by a participant in those discussions that some ENGO members have directly threatened industry representatives and promised to destroy their businesses unless they agree to a total phase out of native forest utilisation and adoption of the ENGO preferred certification process.

These ENGO representatives reject all attempts at compromise. In this day and age, with more individuals recognising that forestry is one of the most self sustaining industries that this country has to offer, is this overbearing nasty approach really necessary or worthwhile? In fact, no less than the International Panel on Climate Change has endorsed sustainable forest management, including harvesting of timber from native forests, as the most effective way to mitigate climate change.

It is apparent that some ENGO representatives' idea of negotiation and compromise is equal to those employed by despots high on the euphoria that oversized egos produce. Essentially, they have been corrupted by power. Their lack of concern and empathy shown for the communities and the thousands of Tasmanians reliant on this fertile industry called forestry is testament to this. In addition, they choose to ignore the overwhelming evidence in support of sustainable forest management practices in Tasmania in the pursuit of an idealised and unrealistic expectation that cessation of native forest silviculture will protect those forests.

The IFA supports improving environmental and community benefits associated with active sustainable forest management. This can only be achieved through open, transparent and honest negotiation and agreement.

It is clear the forest industry/ENGO discussions are not based on these principles. IFA hopes that despite the outcome of these discussions, there will be a further process that engages the wider community and focuses on balanced, long term, science based outcomes that recognise the contribution of native forests to the environmental, social and economic well being of Australia.

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