



Campaign targeting Reflex paper will lead to depletion of world's most vulnerable forests

Media Release (2-Feb-2011)

The latest attempt at economic sabotage by the Wilderness Society to stop companies using Australian made Reflex paper has highlighted that commonsense has been thrown by the way side in the race to abolish Australian wood production from sustainably managed native forests. It has emerged that the Wilderness Society is targeting Australian Paper (AP) under the cover of the Trade Practices Act, because AP uses native forest sourced timber in its paper making process at Maryvale in Gippsland, Victoria.

President of the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA), Dr Peter Volker commented that 'the Wilderness Society is using tactics known as "eco-bullying" to target AP customers, the retailers of Reflex photocopy paper to stop purchasing and reselling the product. We have seen similar attacks targeting Bunnings hardware stores and international buyers of Tasmanian forest products, particularly in Japan.

The Wilderness Society is campaigning that AP should exclusively source its raw material from plantations as a substitute for native forests. "The problem with this stance is that it is counterproductive to favour either plantations or native forests – what is important, is that the wood sourced from supplies which have verified sustainability credentials." he said.

The Institute of Foresters of Australia is concerned that campaigns of eco-bullying will lead to irrational outcomes for the world's forests. Already Australia is witnessing increased imports of tropical timber and paper from south-east Asia and Africa. "This is putting increased pressure on other countries to provide our wood when Australia has an international standard forest reserve system combined with sustainably managed production forests. Australia can and should be providing its own raw materials and convert these into value-added products which Reflex paper definitely is."

The Wilderness Society is promoting the message that it is bad to use native forests for wood supply. As a result this is leading to Australian's relying on offshore purchasing because plantations cannot produce all of what native forests give us. Dr Volker said, "Put simply, there is a place for both native forests and plantations and it's time now to stop the attitude that there can and should be only one."

Australia has come a long way in ensuring that consumers can have confidence in Australian timber products bought from any retail outlet. Dr Volker says that Australian forest managers of both plantations and native forests have embraced certification systems on top of the already world class environmental controls exercised through our legislative and regulatory systems. He added, "We cannot have any such confidence about the environmental credentials of imported tropical timbers, particularly those used in furniture, decking and some photocopy paper."

"There are better ways for the Wilderness Society to focus its energies, such as assisting and supporting Australia's neighbours, in raising standards of forest management instead of expecting them to fill supply gaps as a result of this type of attack and non support of Australian forest management and forest products."

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