

Tuesday 25th September 2012

Dear friend of forest conservation,

We are writing to inform you of recent communications from the Australian Conservation Foundation and The Wilderness Society to Japanese customers of Ta Ann Tasmania, and to ask for your support.

The Australian Conservation Foundation and The Wilderness Society have sent two letters in secret, both requesting that the Japanese continue to buy Ta Ann product originating from Tasmanian native forests, despite the fact that the wood supply requirements of Ta Ann have been officially identified as *the* driver for logging high conservation value forests. The letters espouse the desire that the supplier not be adversely affected by any change to their contracts and ask that the contracts be maintained. No concern is expressed over the ongoing logging destruction of forests used to create those products.

The Chief Executive officer of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Don Henry, and the National Director of The Wilderness Society, Lyndon Schneiders, co-signed the letters.

This act is undermining the chances of achieving the protection of magnificent forests in Tasmania, and also the campaigns of Tasmanian, Australian and Japanese groups who have been participating in a successful markets campaign for the past twelve months. **We have consistently asked companies receiving Ta Ann product to call for an immediate stop to logging the conservation claim in Tasmania whilst negotiations over the future protection of these forests take place, and to refuse to take wood product coming from inside this area.**

The ACF and TWS letters are clearly designed to counteract this campaign and to appease the forest industry. They repeatedly express concern for *"a sustainable future for the forest industries in Tasmania"*, but not for the fate of the magnificent forests under the chainsaw. We do not believe that their members and supporters are aware of, or would condone this action.

Huon Valley Environment Centre, Markets for Change, The Last Stand, JATAN (Japan Tropical Forest Action Network) and Still Wild Still Threatened have been working together in a campaign alliance for the past twelve months.

One of the key components of our campaign has been to inform Ta Ann's corporate customers of the truth about where their products come from. The goal is that Ta Ann receives clear market signals that their corporate customers don't want to be involved in the destruction of Tasmania's iconic forests and this will encourage a rapid transition to more sustainable options, enabling forest protection.

Our groups have been working to secure protection of high conservation value forests and a rapid transition out of native forests in Tasmania. Last year we visited Japan and met with corporate customers of Ta Ann who outlined to us their requirements for high environmental standards and the rating systems they apply to assessing the eco credentials of the wood products they stock. They were clearly surprised to discover the actual source of the Ta Ann plywood they were receiving and had obviously been misled. They had understood that they were buying plantation grown 'eco-wood'. Our subsequent cyber action has enabled thousands of people to send messages of concern to these companies and has resulted in the cancellation or suspension of at least one major contract.

The forestry industry has been clear that a key incentive for them to reach an agreement in Tasmania is their need for market security. Such security can be obtained by ceasing to log the contentious forests, in which case our markets action would cease. Importantly, the recent secret communications to Japan from The Wilderness Society and the Australian Conservation Foundation held out false confidence to Japanese customers that an Interim Agreement reached in the Tasmanian forest negotiations would deliver market certainty. However, this Interim Agreement does not provide secure forest protection or, in fact, any agreement whatsoever to protect any native forest, yet it endorses Ta Ann continuing to receive native forest wood supply and abandons a transition out of native forests.

There is still no final forest agreement in Tasmania and the outlook is bleak as forestry industry representatives have now suspended their participation in the talks. **Far from giving peace a chance, the letters have reduced pressure for the forestry industry to come to an agreement.**

At best the ACF TWS letters are grossly misguided, at worst they are a capitulation to industry. In either case these peak bodies have shown they are willing to support the forestry industry and deliberately undermine our campaign in secret. They have fully endorsed the ongoing logging of high conservation value forests for Ta Ann and their Japanese customers by making this communication with the markets.

The letters have today been exposed in the media due to a leak from an unknown source in Tasmania outside of the conservation movement. We ask that you please contact ACF and TWS to tell them that their actions are unprecedented and unacceptable. Request that they immediately repudiate them.

Importantly we also need your public support in the media, letters to the editor and public advocacy for the cessation of logging high conservation value forests and the cessation of purchase of the resulting product in Japan or anywhere else.

For the forests,



Peg Putt  
**Markets for Change**  
peg.putt@gmail.com



Jenny Weber  
**Huon Valley Environment Centre**  
jweber@nativeforest.net

P.S. Please find attached a copy of the cyber action message to Japanese customers of Ta Ann so that you can verify the content of our messaging. We would welcome your joining this action if you have not already done so, by going to <http://www.taann.net> and clicking on the Pinocchio image on the right hand side of the page. We also attach a copy of the ACF / TWS joint letter.