
Australian NGOs do not support Minister Tuckey's initiative.

The following letter is being circulated worldwide by a large number of Australian NGOs:

"We the undersigned representatives of Australian conservation NGOs are writing to you to express our opposition to the approach taken by our Federal Minister for Forestry and Conservation, Mr. Wilson Tuckey, to regulate independent forest certification schemes at the international level.

As you may know, Minister Tuckey has invited a number of government representatives to meet in New York in November to discuss the creation of an intergovernmental mechanism to regulate the operation of private, voluntary, non-governmental certification programs. However, Minister Tuckey has decided not to invite any non-governmental representatives, or in fact anyone who is directly involved in operating a certification program. We believe the closed nature of this meeting is highly inappropriate.

Full transparency, and the meaningful consultation and participation of relevant stakeholders have been acknowledged by many institutions, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, as essential components in credible forest certification and labelling schemes. Despite these widely accepted criteria, to date no Australian NGOs have been approached by the Australian Federal Government to seek their support for Minister Tuckey's initiative. Nor has the Australian general public been made aware of this scheme, we believe because the Minister knows it lacks fundamental credibility.

Due in part to forest policies advocated by Minister Tuckey and others, certification has become a very controversial issue in Australia. We believe Minister Tuckey may be attempting to elevate our domestic controversies into the international arena by asking other governments to support his ill-advised proposal. We feel this would represent a serious divergence from recent directions in the international forest policy debate, and will surely trigger widespread NGO opposition.

For these reasons we respectfully request that your government declines Mr Tuckey's invitation to attend the New York meeting.

Sincerely Yours,

To Date:

Tim Cadman, Native Forest Network; Beth Schultz, Conservation Council of WA; Peter Sims, Tarkine National Coalition; Cam Walker, Friends of the Earth; Harriett Swift, Bega Chipstop; Virginia Young, The Wilderness Society; Rod Anderson, Environment Victoria; John Poppins, Amcor Green Shareholders; Jill Redwood, Concerned Residents of East Gippsland; Peter Roberstson, West Australian Forest Alliance; Noel Plum, National Parks Association of New South Wales; Bill Peisley, Project Officer, Rainforest Information Centre; Leonie Van der Maesen, FoE Australia."

Source: Native Forest Network Southern Hemisphere;

