

Dear customer of Ta Ann plywood products,

We, the undersigned organisations and individuals, write to indicate our support for JATAN (Japan Tropical Forest Action Network), Markets for Change, ObserverTree and the Huon Valley Environment Centre in their dialogue with you. We are concerned about the role that Japanese companies are playing in the consumption of timber products of Ta Ann which are sourced from high conservation value forests in Tasmania, Australia and unsustainable forest operations in the Malaysian state of Sarawak.

We appreciate that you have procurement policies designed to ensure high environmental and social standards in the product you stock, but that as customers of Ta Ann Tasmania product you may have been misled. This product is not plantation grown and nor can it be described as eco-friendly.

Magnificent Tasmanian forests are being logged every day to produce plywood veneer flooring sold in Japan by Ta Ann. 572,000 hectares of forest in Tasmania proposed for protection have been independently assessed.<sup>i</sup> The vast majority of the proposed reserves “meet one or more National or World Heritage criteria” and “represent the last chance to address and protect many natural heritage values on forested public land”.<sup>ii</sup>

Ta Ann has been officially identified as the company whose wood supply requirements are driving the logging inside this area.<sup>iii</sup> We understand that your company is a customer of this product, and therefore we are writing to ask that you cease to deal in it whilst it comes from such unsustainable and unacceptable sources.

We also inform you that a recent *Interim Agreement*<sup>iv</sup> between some environmental groups and the forestry industry in Tasmania does not provide secure forest protection or, in fact, any agreement whatsoever to protect any native forest. There is still no final forest agreement in Tasmania and forestry industry groups recently destabilised the situation by suspending their participation. Now only a few weeks remain in which to arrive at a final agreement. There is no certainty that any agreement will be reached, according to the forestry industry. There is also no assurance that if an agreement should be reached such an agreement will be satisfactory in relation to forest protection and forest practices, given the many deficiencies of the Interim Agreement.

Please also take heed that PEFC certification, which endorses the Australian Forestry standard (AFS) is totally inadequate for Australian wood products, including those of Ta Ann. It does not prevent high conservation value forests from being logged and then entering the supply chain.

We would appreciate your support for an immediate stop to logging the conservation claim in Tasmania, and for its secure protection in reserves.

Lastly and importantly we are also aware that some trading companies have recently started to promote timber product sourced from Sarawak, Malaysia and some flooring manufacturers have begun to promote their product sourced from Sarawak, Malaysia. We are concerned that this may imply that your company may source or be supplied with an alternative timber source from Sarawak. The environmental degradation and abuses of indigenous human rights in Sarawak by the timber industry have been well documented and breaches of legal traditional ownership have been proven in the courts of Sarawak and Malaysia.<sup>v</sup> The practices of timber companies that supply plywood to the international market, have led to forced or coerced displacement of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands. The ecological consequences of logging in Sarawak are of great magnitude. Such a source of supply would not meet your high environmental and social standards for purchase.

Respectfully

Bob Brown, Former Leader of the Australian Greens, Australia

Rainforest Information Centre, Australia

Rainforest Action Network, Tokyo

NPO Rainbow, Japan

HUTAN Group—Japan and Malaysia

The Sloth Club Japan

Ramould Siew, President, TAHABAS The Indigenous Peoples Customary Land Rights Network of Sarawak.

BRIMAS Borneo Resources International, Sarawak

SAVE Sarawak's Rivers Network, Sarawak

Sarawak Dayak Iban Association, Sarawak

Randy Hayes, founder of the Rainforest Action Network, USA

Ancient Forest International,

Bruno Manser Fonds, Switzerland

Rainforest Rescue/Rettet den Regenwald, Germany.

Dr Alison Bleaney & Dr David Obendorf, Tasmanian Public and Environmental Health Network

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<sup>i</sup> The 'Tasmanian Forest Agreement – Summary Report of Conservation Values' prepared for the Independent Verification Group Of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement states that "*In general, the ENGO report's claims regarding the conservation values of their Proposed new forest reserves (ie the ENGO forest) are largely substantiated*", p7, referring to the 572,000 hectares of forest proposed by the ENGOs for reservation. However the entire area within those boundaries is now measured to be 563,383 hectares, according to the verification process.

<sup>ii</sup> Mackey, Brendan March 2012 'Tasmanian Forest Agreement – Summary Report of Conservation Values' Prepared for the Independent Verification Group of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, p7.

<sup>iii</sup> Hoffmann, O. & Williams, D. (2011a) Report of independent expert schedulers appointed under the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement. 12 October 2011. <http://www.environment.gov.au/land/forests/pubs/schedulers-report-12oct2011.pdf> & Hoffmann, O. & Williams, D. (2011b) Rescheduling Work – January and February 2012. 23 December 2011. As requested by the Australian Government on 21 November 2011. <http://www.environment.gov.au/land/forests/pubs/schedulers-report-23dec2011.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Interim Agreement on Tasmanian Wood Supply and Conservation. 15 August 2012. [http://www.forestsagreement.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Signatory\\_Interim\\_Agreement\\_2012\\_08\\_15-Final1.pdf](http://www.forestsagreement.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Signatory_Interim_Agreement_2012_08_15-Final1.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> Global Witness. 'Pandering to the Loggers, Why WWF's Global Forest and Trade Network is not working,' July 2011. [http://www.globalwitness.org/sites/default/files/library/Pandering\\_to\\_the\\_loggers\\_WEB\\_0.pdf](http://www.globalwitness.org/sites/default/files/library/Pandering_to_the_loggers_WEB_0.pdf) & Huon Valley Environment Centre 'Taan: Destroying Rainforests and Violating Human Rights in Sarawak'. February 2012. & Sahabat Alam Malaysia, (2011) 'In defence of rainforests and indigenous peoples' rights in Sarawak', A dossier of activities from 2008 – 2010.