

Letter in Canberra Times, 2nd August 2007

Tree blindness

Don Henry ("Tasmania's old growth forests should be saved in spite of politics", July 31, p11) once again displays his fetishism about old trees, and especially the ubiquitous old eucalypts in Tasmania.

Trees grow old just as we do, and removing what is essentially deadwood that has long since ceased absorbing carbon dioxide allows their saplings starved of light to flourish and reduce the atmospheric carbon dioxide that on other occasions he frets about.

All too many supporters of the Greens, and Henry, seem to think of moribund eucalypts as if they were irreplaceable paintings by Rembrandt. They are not, and are easily and beneficially replaced by their progeny.

His hostility extends to Papua New Guineans, whom he considers to have even less rights to aspire to improving their life chances, with his attack in the same article on commercial forestry in their country.

His swipe at the report by ITS Global showing the undeniable economic benefits of the proposed pulp mill in Tasmania ignores the companion report by Sweco PIC showing that the mill will be able to meet all environmental standards. Similarly Henry fails to mention the capacity of plantation forestry to quintuple living standards in PNG, as so well demonstrated by ITS Global's reports on forestry there.

Instead he prefers to think of Papua New Guineans as equivalent to old-growth eucalypts, to be preserved in their feathers and war paint as if they were utterly unworthy of his lifestyle.

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