

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## ANU changing tune

In a letter of the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2008 referring to the recent report titled “Green Carbon – the role of natural forests in carbon storage. Part 1, Prof. Michael Hutchinson, Director, The Fenner School of Environment and Society, states,

*“this publication was peer reviewed by two anonymous experts. Independent comment was also received from two further experts. Thus, the publication was reviewed by four experts”*

On the 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2008, Prof. Aidan Byrne, Dean, College of Science, The Australian University, in a letter to the Examiner Newspaper in Tasmania writes,

*“For the record the paper was published by ANU E-Press an organisation that is on the Federal Government’s register of Acceptable Commercial Publishers and one that requires independent review of all works published.”*

Interestingly Prof. Byrne does not claim that the paper was independently reviewed, but one can be forgiven for assuming that is what is implied.

Today Jane O’Dwyer, Director, Communication and External Liaison Office. Office of the Vice-Chancellor, The Australian National University states,

*“This particular piece of research was subject to peer review by three reviewers, including one from outside the university”.*

Notice that the claim of “independence” has been dropped and for good reason, at least two of the reviewers were from within the university and it seems we’ve lost one reviewer along the way also. Maybe this is explained by the following?

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 2008 in a PowerPoint presentation given by the authors of the paper, they thank Dr. Michael Roderick and Emeritus Prof. Henry Nix for their review of the draft of the paper.

As these persons cannot possibly be the “anonymous” reviewers they must be the “independent” experts referred to by Prof. Hutchinson.

As it turns out Emeritus Prof. Henry Nix is the co chair of the Wilderness Society’s Wild Country Panel. Given the partial funding of the paper by the Wilderness Society even Prof Nix would have to agree that at least the appearance of Independence if not any notion thereof is compromised.

It is worth also noting that one of the reports author’s Dr Brendan Mackey is also a member of that same Wilderness Society Panel.

No wonder the ANU has stopped trying to portray the expert review of the paper as fully “independent”.

Another curious feature of the work is the statement within the work which states.

*"A technical paper that details the source data, the methods used and the full results is being prepared for a scientific journal. In the interim, any technical questions regarding data and methods should be directed to the authors."*

If the work has already been peer reviewed why wasn't this material released with the report. TCA calls upon the authors to make this critical supporting material publicly available immediately.

We further draw the attention of both the ANU and its Wilderness Society sponsors to the two statements below made recently;

The Head of the Forest Conservation Programme at IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature recently released this landmark statement from the Forest Dialogue forum:

*"Of all the options for responding to climate change, forest-related mitigation measures are, in the short to medium term, among the most practicable and cost-effective. They also have very low opportunity costs and can make an immediate and direct contribution to sustainable development and rural livelihoods"*.

This statement was further supported from the same forum by James Griffiths, Managing Director of the Sustainable Forest Products Industry project at the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, who added:

*"All of us have a shared responsibility to insist on sustainable forest management that produces fibre for wood and paper products, bio-energy and that also provides critical ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration and water quality,"*

From these statements and that of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2007,

*"In the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fiber or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit."*

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It is becoming increasingly clear that Australia's green groups are finding themselves increasing out of step with the rest of the world and the science on Climate Change on forests and the valuable role that active forest management can play in its mitigation

TCA repeats its call upon the Australian Green Groups to embrace the findings of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and to look for ways to engage and work with Australia's world leading and sustainable forest industry sector to maximize the benefits potentially available socially, environmentally and economically to the Australian and International communities.

For further information please contact:

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Sources:

Power Point presentation

[http://www.griffith.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/94799/Green-carbon-presentation.pdf](http://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/94799/Green-carbon-presentation.pdf)

Wild Country Panel [http://www.wilderness.org.au/articles/wc\\_science](http://www.wilderness.org.au/articles/wc_science) accessed 22 Sep 08

The Forest Dialogue

<http://www.wbcsd.org/DocRoot/dD1UEkr4tCvIreW5lmaS/TFDclimatestatement.pdf>