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### **Steve Biddulph makes passionate plea to end old growth logging.**

On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2010 Steve Biddulph, author, psychologist and patron of the Florentine Protection Society, visited the magnificent Upper Florentine Valley. He sat under the canopy on a bank in the rain and gave a very moving and passionate speech to the crowd.

*Hello, it's great to be with you in this beautiful place, today. This kind of forest is called a 'cathedral' forest because of the immense size of the trees and the open spaces between them, and it really is a sacred piece of creation, one of the few last wild places there are. This may be all destroyed in a few months time, we might be among the last people to see it like it is.*

*I'm proud to be patron of the Florentine Protection Society. My work is with families. About four million parents use my books, in 27 languages and about forty countries. Parents care about their kids, and they care about the future. They care about what is happening here in Tasmania, because the future is on the line. I say this as a science writer, as well as a psychologist who knows how slowly people come to see the big trends of history – the future of the world is being decided now. In places like this, because of carbon storage, because of the effects on water and weather and species diversity, effects that can never be turned back, the turning point is here and now.*

*Wet temperate forests such as these of the Upper Florentine are amongst the greatest carbon storages in the world, holding up to 1200 tonnes a hectare. When a forest such as this is logged, less than 10% ends up as sawn timber, the rest ending up as woodchips or is wasted along the way, trashed on the forest floor and burned. Around 200 tonnes of carbon per hectare is lost into the atmosphere in a forestry burn. The carbon cost of forestry burns in Tasmania exceeds the total carbon footprint of all Tasmanians, in energy, transport, and every other activity carried out, added together. Forestry found this out in its own studies way back in 2001, but have kept very quiet about it.*

*Climate change will decide the future of the human race. Last year in Victoria 173 people were incinerated in unprecedented fires in unprecedented temperatures. The Firefighters Union and emergency services are now campaigning full time on climate change, they see what it has done. But few people realize that in that same week of heatwave across the eastern states, over 300 more people, mostly old or ill people, died of heatstroke. Climate change kills people. Flood and fire are just the dramatic ways, food and famine are the big killers. In the next 20 years the CSIRO believes most Australian semi-arid wheat lands will become unproductive. Australia will become a net importer of wheat. But who will have any to spare ?*

*Every day I live in Tasmania I feel both hope and grief. Whenever I see a log truck full of four hundred year old trees on the way to the woodchip mill, I feel the grief that that's another forest gully destroyed – smashed up blackwood and sassafras and myrtle, precious timbers ground into the mud, muddy water and pesticide into the catchment.*

*I feel hope because the truth is coming out. We hear the word "corruption" used every day now about Tasmanian politics, two deputy premiers and a premier have been brought down by that truth. The Pulp Mill Assessment act was morally corrupt, and everyone who voted for it was too. It subverted the legitimate planning process and took away our democratic rights. It was universally seen by legislative experts as a disgrace. But another word for corrupt is weak. Because it's not muscle that makes you strong, or a loud voice. It's knowing the difference between right and wrong. And when you know, you choose. And if you choose right, you are unstoppable. Jesus, and Gandhi, and King, and Mandela, all had that gentle kind of courage to change history. They just told the truth, and kept on telling it.*

*The horrible truth is that forestry, as its practiced now in Tasmania, is a cancer. Fly over the state, and it looks like a cancer, eating out the heart of the land. Its also a cancer on the politics of the Liberal and Labor parties, it has eaten the soul out of Labor. I come from three generations of trade union heritage, and I am appalled at what Tasmanian Labor has come to, how much it has sold out the ordinary working person to please the big end of town.*

*Professional foresters come from overseas, and are shocked at what they see, the mismanagement and inefficiency and waste. Third world practices. Just not caring. One day forestry in this state will be done professionally and for the long term future, there will be no chipping of high value native forests, no wasting of precious timbers, no wholesale destruction of wild places that can't even be done at a profit. The destruction of the Upper Florentine would not even be profitable, it would destroy more jobs than it creates, it's an act of vandalism to grab a little more land.*

*The Florentine is as beautiful as its name, ancient and rich, a valley of Eden surrounded by World Heritage mountains, its our claim on the world, a reason for the world to care and to visit here. Its belongs to our children, for air they can breathe, water they can drink, food they can eat. Please vote out the men who lie and scheme and would let it all be destroyed. Please make a stand for the families of tomorrow. Their lives will depend on what we do now.*