



## On World Forestry Day it's time to look in our own backyard

I am proud to be a forester educated here in Canberra at the Australian National University.

Today is World Forestry Day and this is cause for me to reflect how poorly forest management issues are understood by civil society as evidenced by recent articles and opinions in *The Canberra Times* ("Last Stand in Sarawak", March 10, pB1) and (Letters, March 18, p16).

Correspondents thought it timely to suggest we should be more concerned about forest practices in our own patch than those affecting the Penan in

Sarawak. However, loss of high quality professional and technical forestry training may be the real danger facing Australia's forests.

Forests are the most environmentally friendly resource known to man and without those of us trained to sustainably utilise their products we would find ourselves living in a world of metal, concrete and plastic. Is that sustainable?

Emotive campaigns to save forests from logging ask us to believe the lie that logging destroys forests and biodiversity. Forests and biodiversity are not

destroyed by logging or fire. Fire is a natural part of the regenerative cycle of the eucalypt forest ecosystem.

Perhaps your correspondents, P. Bloomsdale and N. Keene, should consider training in some aspect of the forestry sector, perhaps as harvesting machine operators, they could then spend some time living in the Australian bush, learning about sustainable forest management while assisting the sector with its critical skills shortage.

Tasmania would be the ideal spot.

**Peter Langdon, member, Institute of Foresters of Australia, Cook**