**The money tree**

by Jonathan Cant

OLD-GROWTH FORESTS of Australia’s tallest tree—the Mountain Ash—are still being logged in Tasmania. This threatens species habitats and leaves behind blackened patches of napalm-scorched earth. Profits are put before the preservation of these majestic eucalypts.

They say “money doesn’t grow on trees” but, at Tahune Airwalk in the state’s south, it does pile up on one particular tree stump. The “Wishing Tree” is all that remains of a felled Huon Pine—Australia’s oldest plant species. From the elevated walkway above, visitors toss coins and try to land them on top of the truncated trunk below. Ironically, these coins are harvested and go towards a worthy cause: the Raptor and Wildlife Refuge of Tasmania.

Tahune Adventures is operated by government-owned Forestry Tasmania which now goes by the public-facing euphemism: Sustainable Timber Tasmania.

Like conjoined twins, there are two Tasmanias living side by side. One whose potential is lopped off. The other, whose untrammelled limbs reach for the sun like Nature’s shining example seen around the world.

Standing on the Airwalk—a hundred feet up—I, too, toss a coin and make a silent wish. It lands dead in the middle of the dead stump, but comes up tails.

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