



## Media Release 28 Sept 2010

### Next steps for Forest Peace Talks

Tasmanian Environmental NGO's have supported Premier David Bartlett's suggestion that the current peace talks around the future of Tasmania's native forests and forest industry need to be brought to a conclusion soon.

Environment Tasmania Director Phil Pullinger said that the industry is in crisis as markets are now demanding timber products that don't destroy native forests.

"We are engaged in peace talks which aim to protect our natural environment, support rural communities, and set the industry on a stronger and more sustainable long term pathway,

"The talks have made enormous progress in finding common ground on key principles. Soon, there will be a need for urgent action to restructure the industry in order to protect our native forests and to protect the jobs that will be lost if no action is taken."

The Wilderness Society's Paul Oosting said the negotiations had come a long way and looked forward to the opportunity for a solution to the conflict over forestry.

"These talks represent a huge opportunity for our state. Many stakeholders understand that this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity.

"We welcome the Premier's recognition of the crisis and the need for action. We look forward to working with him to see action taken to resolve this thirty year long conflict.

"Together, forest industry representatives, forest workers unions and the environment groups have achieved significant progress, and we believe that the peace talks can come to a conclusion and be further strengthened through the involvement and support of both governments and all political parties at a State and Federal level," concluded Lindsay Hesketh, from the Australian Conservation Foundation.

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