



Media Release

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Forests Breakthrough: Environment Groups and Forestry Sector Sign Agreement

A major breakthrough has been achieved in the long running dispute over Tasmania's forests.

Timber communities, forest unions, industry and environment groups today announced an agreement has been reached to develop a more sustainable timber industry and end logging of the state's remaining valuable native forests.

The "Tasmanian Forests Statement of Principles" sets the state's timber industry on a new path to economic opportunities through plantation-based forestry, protecting timber worker's jobs and native forests.

The in-principle agreement is the first step toward a lasting solution to more than three decades of dispute over Tasmanian's forests. The groups involved will now seek the support of both the Tasmanian and federal governments and major political parties before a timeline for implementation is finalised.

The agreement involves industry moving out of native forest logging and into suitable plantation forestry.

Environment and community groups remain opposed to the current proposed pulp mill in the Tamar Valley and emphasised that any mill must be based on a new and transparent public consultation process.

"The forestry industry, unions and environment groups have found common ground in the interests of all Tasmanians. This will pave the way for a sustainable timber industry that protects jobs and also protects the state's remaining unique native forests," said Environment Tasmania's Phill Pullinger.

"The goodwill demonstrated through this agreement is genuine. People's jobs

depend on it, the state's economy will be damaged without it and the protection of our native forest heritage is now possible through it."

An end to logging of native forests will also protect critical habitats for Tasmanian devils and other threatened species.

Under the agreement, a moratorium on the logging of high native forests will be phased in over three months, while maintaining essential supplies for necessary timber mill operations.

A major focus of the agreement is on establishing a competitive marketing edge for the timber industry — producing more of the sustainable timber products increasingly demanded by consumers – and the development of a range of plantation-based down-stream processing facilities, including a pulp mill.

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Signatories to the Agreement (alphabetical order):

Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)

The Australian Forest Contractor's Association (AFCA)

The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU)

Environment Tasmania Inc (ET)

The Forest Industries Association of Tasmania (FIAT)

The National Association of Forestry (NAFI)

Tasmanian Country Sawmiller's Federation (TCSF)

The Tasmanian Forest Contractor's Association (TFCA)

Timber Communities Australia Ltd (TCA)

The Wilderness Society (TWS)

High Resolution press photos are available for download at

<http://www.et.org.au/media-images-tf>