

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Welcome progress to deliver native forest protection

The Australian Conservation Foundation, The Wilderness Society and Environment Tasmania today welcomed the Government's announcement of a settlement with Gunns Ltd to retire its native forest wood supply quota.

"Retiring Gunns' wood supply quota is a critical step in implementing the Tasmanian Forest Intergovernmental Agreement — allowing the immediate protection of 430,000 hectares of native forests and providing transitional support for timber workers and contractors," said Denise Boyd from the Australian Conservation Foundation.

"This settlement frees Tasmanians from an obligation to provide large volumes of native forests to Gunns or any other logging company and enables both governments to immediately enter a conservation agreement that protects 430,000 hectares of important and unique native forests in places such as the Tarkine Rainforest, Great Western Tiers, Blue Tier and the Upper Florentine Valley," said Phill Pullinger of Environment Tasmania.

"As well as protecting important native forests, the intergovernmental agreement will also provide support for timber workers and contractors, for a transition away from the commodity logging of native forests and for a more diversified economy through a regional development package," Dr Pullinger said.

"The remainder of the \$43 million available under clause 34 of the Intergovernmental Agreement should be used to support a transition to a sustainable industry by allowing native forest processors to voluntarily exit the industry treat communities fairly, and ensure Tasmania's high conservation value forests are protected." Dr Pullinger said.

"The Intergovernmental Agreement funds should be only used for the purpose outlined in the Agreement, and no party should attempt to take this money away from timber workers, communities, and forest protection," said Warrick Jordan of the Wilderness Society.

The groups said the current business model of Forestry Tasmania is unsustainable and is the subject of a strategic review which is due to be reported on in October. Therefore, no settlement funding should be provided to Forestry Tasmania in advance of the outcomes of the strategic review and an anticipated restructure of the agency.

The groups said the next critical steps in the Agreement include the signing of the conservation agreement to immediately protect 430,000 hectares of high conservation value native forests, a rapid finalisation of re-scheduling of logging out of high conservation value forests, and the release of financial support for timber workers and contractors impacted by the re-structuring of the industry.

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