

## **ENVIRONMENT GROUPS BACK FORESTS AGREEMENT**

### ***Forest protection, timber workers and logging contractors support unanimously backed***

A statewide meeting of environment groups today accepted a motion in support of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement. Environment Tasmania held their General Meeting at the Launceston Environment Centre today, where environment groups from across the State discussed the benefits of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement.

In a motion passed, the groups:-

1. Congratulated the State and Commonwealth governments on delivering an agreement that once implemented will deliver a landmark nature conservation outcome, a restructure of the timber industry and a regional development package to diversify Tasmania's economy.
2. Urged both governments to ensure the full protection of high conservation value forests identified for protection as permanent national parks and reserves, along with an effective transition of commodity timber production out of the remainder of public native forests.
3. Strongly supported the assistance provided through the agreement to timber workers, logging contractors and rural communities to help them through the industry restructure.
4. Agreed that if implemented, the IGA will immediately protect approximately 430,000 hectares of important and unique native forests identified by environment groups, protect an additional 142,000 hectares of forests in the final legislative package, transition the logging industry away from public native forest into sustainable and socially acceptable plantations and create new opportunities for regional communities and economies through investment in new jobs and local economies.
5. Urged both governments to reform Forestry Tasmania, which has: failed to end logging in the native forests earmarked for protection, continued to export whole logs of unprocessed native timber, and attempted to undermine the agreement through a publicly funded PR, media and advertising campaign.
6. Urged both governments to implement the outstanding principles from the Statement of Principles including voluntary private land conservation, integrated catchment management, restoration and plantation reform.

"Environment Tasmania is Tasmania's conservation council. We have 25 member groups and it is great that so many of our member groups have decided to back the Intergovernmental Agreement and are committed to securing a lasting solution to the forest debate in Tasmania" said Dr Phill Pullinger from Environment Tasmania.

#### **For comment:**

Dr Phill Pullinger, Environment Tasmania	0428 554 934
Lesley Nicklason, Friends of the Blue Tier	0400 557 418
Andrew Lohrey, North East Tasmanian Land Trust	0409 130 087

**Tasmania's regional environment groups have issued the following statements:**

"We support the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement in full. This means important native forests including the Blue Tier, South Sister, Eastern Highlands, Wielangta, the Styx, Upper Florentine, Huon, Picton and Weld Valleys, the Tarkine, the Great Western Tiers, the North-East Highlands and Bruny Island stand to be protected"

*Rob Blakers, Nature Photographers Tasmania.*

"We support the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement which will protect important native forests including the northeast highlands national park which will protect the headwaters of 14 river systems, a majority of northeast Tasmania's rivers"

*Lesley Nicklason, Friends of the Blue Tier.*

"This is a long-term agreement that begins with a process to verify the conservation values of these native forests and to determine to best reserve design to protect this globally-valuable forest. However, an immediate halt on logging in these high conservation value areas is essential and overdue"

*Jenny Cambers-Smith, West Wellington Protection Group.*

"It is great that the habitats of some of Australia's most endangered wildlife including the spotted-tailed quoll, the swift parrot, Tasmanian giant freshwater lobster and the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle will be protected in this agreement"

*Louise Crossley, Spirit of Bruny.*

"Tasmania's forests are some of the world's most carbon dense forests, drawing down pollution from the atmosphere and storing it in trees, soil and branches. Protecting these forests will help reduce Tasmania's and Australia's greenhouse gas emissions"

*Liz Johnstone, The Wilderness Society Tasmania.*

"This Intergovernmental Agreement commits the Commonwealth Government to providing \$7million each year in perpetuity to support the management of the additional reserves. The challenge will be to ensure that this money is used by the new managers of these areas, the Parks and Wildlife Service, to protect them from all significant forms of development so that they remain natural and wild for all Australians to enjoy"

*Paul Smith, Tasmanian National Parks Association.*

"This is a great agreement but it will require improvements in forest governance to make it work, the governments must reform Forestry Tasmania immediately. Forestry Tasmania has for 40 years systematically destroyed wild landscapes across Tasmania and refused to listen to and take on board community concerns"

*Andrew Lohrey, The North East Tasmanian Land Trust.*

"Tasmania's forests are a great natural assets and there will be new opportunities to create new jobs for Tasmanians and to grow our clean, green and clever economy."

*Frank Giles, Save Our Sister.*

"There is a lot of work still to be done but this landmark agreement means many new forest areas are secure from logging, keeping millions of tonnes of stored carbon out of the atmosphere and ensuring the maintenance of wildlife habitat including that of the endangered Tasmanian devil"

*Jo McRae from the Florentine Protection Society.*

"We all rely on the biodiversity of our native forests for clean air and water. With 13 500 known species of plants, animals and fungi, Tasmania is one of the most biodiverse islands in the world"

*Edmund Pickering, Launceston Environment Centre.*

"Tasmania's forests are a natural asset that provide clean air and water. They are the lungs of our nation and deserve protection. This agreement offers the opportunity for the threatened and endangered species and their habitats in the Wielangta forests to be permanently protected"

*Sally Meredith, Wild Wielangta.*

"We expect that the Intergovernmental Agreement will protect the Tarkine from continued logging, however, we must see the legislation of new national parks without delay to remove the remaining threat from mining in this last disease free refuge of the Tasmanian devil. The unique Tarkine Temperate Rainforest also contains some of the most significant Giant Tasmanian freshwater lobster and Tasmanian wedge-tailed Eagle habitat and it is vital it is protected as a part of this agreement"

*Scott Jordan, Tarkine National Coalition.*

"We have worked for years to see the projection of the unique forests of the Great Western Tiers. This agreement provides the opportunity to establish a Great Western Tiers National Park. This new National Park will enable new opportunities for nature based tourism in this region"

*Rosemary Norwood, Friends of Jackeys Marsh.*

"The Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental agreement provides the best opportunity in decades to protect important native forests all degrading activities."

*Brett Tooker, Peninsula Environment Network.*

For more information about Environment Tasmania and its members please visit [www.et.org.au](http://www.et.org.au)

**ENDS**