



MEDIA RELEASE

10 March 2011

Environment groups' response to Federal Minister Burke's decision on Gunns' pulp mill

Environment groups today acknowledged the constructive progress on plantation wood supply in Minister Tony Burke's legally-binding conditions for the proposed pulp mill, but expressed serious concerns about unaddressed community opposition to the mill and the mill's marine impacts and reiterated their opposition to the project.

"We are opposed to this project but we do recognise the Minister's legally-binding decision to require the pulp mill to only use wood from plantations," said Lyndon Schneiders from The Wilderness Society.

"It means it is illegal for the proposed pulp mill to ever use native forest timber and we recognise this is a step forward. Any pulp mill needs to be supplied from a plantation resource base that is sustainably managed and of a scale acceptable to local communities," Mr Schneiders said.

"We do recognise and welcome tougher standards and the improvements to some of the environmental benchmarks set for the marine effluent, but will have to now have the opportunity to fully assess the complex marine modelling data associated with this decision to be able to make further assessment of these proposed changes," he said.

"We are concerned about the potential impacts the ocean disposal of industrial process effluent will have on Tasmania's marine environment, fisheries, and coastal amenity and believe the Minister has made the wrong decision because he has not implemented the precautionary approach," said Dr Thomas Moore from Environment Tasmania.

"Despite the welcome improvements, much community opposition remains," said Don Henry from the Australian Conservation Foundation.

"It is now up to the company, along with the state and federal governments, to embark on a legitimate, independent and transparent process, with public participation, to assess the impacts of a pulp mill development in the Tamar Valley. We are committed to a resolution of the forest conflict in Tasmania," Mr Henry said.

Contacts:

Don Henry, Australian Conservation Foundation	0418 501 395
Dr Thomas Moore, Environment Tasmania	0488 334 733
Lyndon Schneiders, The Wilderness Society	0451 633 200
Vica Bayley (in Hobart), The Wilderness Society	0400 644 939