



## **MEDIA RELEASE - 27/02/2011**

# **ENVIRONMENT GROUPS WATCHING COMMONWEALTH DECISION ON PULP MILL MARINE MODULES**

In advance of the March 4th approval deadline on the final EPBC modules for Gunns Tamar Valley pulp mill proposal, Environment groups have today released a précis on the proposed mill's risks to Tasmania's marine and coastal values.

"The mill proposal will involve the dispersal of 23 - 51 gigalitres per year of industrial process effluent into a sensitive and pristine part of the Bass Strait environment," said Dr Thomas Moore, the reports author, oceanographer, and Environment Tasmania's coasts coordinator,

"We are concerned about the impact that this industrial effluent will have on fisheries, marine ecosystems, the local coastal environment, and human health," he continued,

"We are alarmed that some of these impacts will not have been adequately considered given the collapse of the RPDC process in 2007 which split the assessment into two separate approvals processes - and we will be closely scrutinizing the decision that Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke makes on these final EPBC modules," he continued.

The Chief Scientist's report clearly states that the 2007 Federal decision ignored independent advice regarding the threat of pollution on Tasmania's beaches and in State waters.

Further, documents released to the Tasmanian Greens under FOI show that Government is aware that there is both scientific uncertainty and increasing concern about risk to ecosystems and fisheries from compounds like sterols, which originate from the pulping, rather than the bleaching process.

"Environment groups are calling on the Minister to fully apply the precautionary principle - safeguarding against threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage despite the lack of full scientific certainty," Dr Moore continued,

"Environment groups are also urging the proponent, Gunns, to show due care and regard for Tasmania's marine industries, coastal environment, and amenities," he concluded.

Environment Tasmania is supportive of the development of a range of downstream processing facilities for plantation timber, but does not support the current pulp mill proposal.

Environment Tasmania is the peak body for Tasmanian environment & conservation groups - and represents over 20 Tasmanian environment groups with collective representation of over 5000 Tasmanians.

**For more information or comment:**

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