

MEDIA STATEMENT

25 July 2011

Environment groups' response to Tas Forests Heads of Agreement

Since Bill Kelty delivered the Signatories Agreement on 22 June, Environment Tasmania, ACF and other signatories have been calling for State and Federal governments to take action.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Gillard and Premier Giddings announced a Heads of Agreement to implement the Statement of Principles forest agreement.

This is a key step and now the challenge is with both the federal and state governments to fully implement this once-in-a-generation opportunity to address the industry crisis and deliver a solution to end the conflict over Tasmania's native forests.

If implemented in good faith, the \$276 million Heads of Agreement package opens the opportunity to:

- protect 572,00 hectares of unique and important native forests in the next 12 months (including a commitment to \$7 million pa for their ongoing management);
- support a transition to sustainable timber industry based on well managed plantations; and
- deliver a well funded regional development strategy that will deliver benefits to Tasmania's regional communities for many years.

We see this as a unique opportunity for Tasmania's environment and economic future. If it is implemented in full, it will protect unique and important native forests and help the timber industry transition from a state of crisis to a strong, stable and sustainable industry that offers secure jobs. It is too important not to get the details right.

To achieve this, the whole Statement of Principles package needs to be delivered and many important details now need to be addressed.

NGOs will be engaging strongly in the coming weeks to ensure that both the state and federal governments produce a final intergovernmental agreement that can deliver on these possibilities.

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