

MEDIA STATEMENT

5 April 2011

Kelty report outlines government action to deliver Tasmanian forest solution

Environment groups (ENGOS) have welcomed the public release of Bill Kelty's interim report on the Tasmanian forest principles agreement and called on governments to urgently implement the report's proposals.

A summary of the proposed actions for governments as stated in the interim report is attached.

The interim report states that the capacity to reach an agreement will be enhanced by '*... a commitment by governments to deliver formal legislative protection to ENGO HCV forest reserve proposal areas*'.

Environment Tasmania, The Wilderness Society and the Australian Conservation Foundation remain committed to the Tasmanian forest principles agreement and will work to deliver all outcomes, including the protection of Tasmania's native forests and the development of a sustainable timber industry in Tasmania.

Position of environment groups on specific issues

1. Protection of native forests

A full moratorium on further logging and road construction in high conservation value forest reserve areas is overdue and needs to be urgently implemented by governments. Environment groups expect governments to quickly legislate to protect high conservation value forests reserve areas and to establish the mechanisms for voluntary exit from native forest logging and the transition to a sustainable timber industry.

2. The Tamar Valley Pulp Mill

The interim report does not state a requirement for the ENGOS to support the Tamar Valley pulp mill. Environment groups continue to oppose the Tamar Valley pulp mill proposal. Gunns has made improvements to some environmental aspects, particularly native forest use, but it does not have a social licence to proceed, due to outstanding issues of concern. Mr Kelty has recommended a review of the current proposed pulp mill assessment. Any new assessment of the proposed mill would have to be independent and robust. There also needs to be an exploration of alternative investment, plantations processing and job creation opportunities for rural and regional Tasmania.

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SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS FOR GOVERNMENT ACTIONS IN INTERIM REPORT

[Includes excerpts from Mr Kelty's interim report]

The chance to establish a workable understanding will be enhanced if there is '... a commitment by governments to deliver formal legislative protection to ENGO HCV forest reserve proposal areas'.

1. *Moratorium implementation*

There was a strongly held view by ENGOs and industry that the moratorium should be in place by 15 March which includes a commitment to wood supply to meet all existing wood supply obligations and protection of ENGO HCV forests as part of the interim outcome. The 6-month moratorium needs to include:

- an end to logging and road construction within ENGO HCV forests
- an agreed process for re-scheduling operations
- a commitment to wood supply to meet existing wood supply obligations
- The involvement of independent auditor Professor Jerry Vanclay

It is proposed that legislative change(s) to reduce saw-log volumes that reflect exited saw-log volumes and mechanisms for transition over time are identified and progressed by the State government.

2. *Future forest industries*

It is proposed that options for a diverse range of plantation processing developments and investments for Tasmania be investigated and assessed. An independent person be appointed to review the current pulp mill assessment, which would attempt to clarify the main areas of concern within the current assessment of the proposal from Gunns Ltd

3. *Regional impact*

It is proposed that Professor Jonathan West and Dr Jacki Schirmer be used to study and develop regional / community based transition plans to be adopted and implemented.

4. *Climate change*

The group propose to develop a specific submission of the impact of the agreement and the alternatives to in relation to climate change and carbon tax considerations

5. *Restructuring*

It is noted that progress has been made in that a verified boundary of proposed ENGO HCV Forest areas has been undertaken and nearing completion. It is noted that various resource scenarios can now be determined. During the restructuring process any redundancies and job layoffs should be assisted by the retraining and re skilling packages. Worker's Assistance Packages recommended to be coordinated by Forest Works. Associated mechanisms to support the voluntary exit of logging, harvest and haulage contractors from the native forests sector will also need to be made available. There is an expectation that government resources will be required to establish the mechanism(s) to support the implementation of the moratorium and assist with industry transition/restructuring.

6. *View of non signatories*

Ensuring that there are mechanisms for broader public participation, engagement and communication about the process will be critical.