

◆ Submission to Legislative Council January 2013

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The Secretary,

Legislative Council Select Committee on the Tasmanian Forests Agreement  
Bill 2012

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◆ Parliament of Tasmania,  
◆ Hobart, Tasmania. 7004.

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- ◆ These negotiations included the key *representative* bodies; for the first time industry, unions and conservationists worked through all relevant issues in one process, to reach agreement.
- ◆ Some representative bodies chose not to participate. Whether due to low expectations in regard to outcomes, or dissatisfaction about the process and participants, is not clear but the fact remains that over the protracted period of negotiations there was more than enough opportunity for any views to be put forward, either formally or informally. That some chose not to do so is no argument against the final agreement.
- ◆ Negotiations included the key *representative* bodies; for the first time industry, unions and conservationists worked through all relevant issues in one process, to reach agreement.
- ◆ The final details of the I.G.A. represent significant compromise *on all sides*. The role of the Legislative Council is to review legislation, BUT this was a *negotiated agreement*. Tampering with the agreement could radically change this, making it in fact a different agreement, one which the different parties may not feel bound to. This is a historic opportunity to finally deal with the forestry industry issues which have caused such division in this State for many years. The Legislative Council needs to be the enabling body here – not the stumbling block.
- ◆ Debate in the Legislative Council often focussed on individuals affected by changes in the forest industry. Major job losses in the industry have already happened quite independently of this agreement process, but due primarily to market forces. The critical issue here is the future of the industry as a whole – if it is to survive at all.

Contractors and workers have already been severely affected but it will only get worse if the industry just staggers on with no certainty - the Legislative Council has a responsibility to look at the bigger picture for Tasmania.

- ◆ It is worth noting that some operators stand to profit by failure of the agreement as it would provide opportunity for them to buy up supply contracts at a handsome profit. Would the Select Committee ask who stands to benefit from it not being implemented? Its failure could mean continuation of an unsustainable and uneconomic industry to benefit a few players, to the detriment of everyone else.
- ◆ The I.G.A. is supported by the majority of the forestry industry itself, due to the collapse of the international market. The only way to salvage part of that market is to have certainty of supply. As mentioned above, changes in the industry have already led to job losses in the past, as well as the collapse of some key players in the industry.
- ◆ Forestry Tasmania has to be continually propped up financially by the taxpayer –

I earnestly appeal to the members of the Select Committee to consider these points in the spirit in which they are offered

**Jack Lomax**  
**900 Lachlan Rd**  
**Lachlan 7140**  
**62 611 584**