

Ph: (03) 6426 2720

Fax: (03) 6426 2310

Email: enquiries@tasspan.com.au

10 Faulkner Drive, Latrobe, TAS, 7307

PO Box 225, Latrobe, TAS, 7307

18 January 2013

TFA Committee
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Attn: Stewart Wright

Dear Sir,

Tasmanian Forestry Agreement:

Submission: Requirement for Access to Hardwood Logs for Timber Bridge Maintenance and Replacement

As a Tasmanian contractor whose core business is bridge construction and maintenance, we wish to register our concern that the proposed TFA and associated reduced access to hardwood logs will negatively affect the repair and construction of timber bridges in Tasmania.

TasSpan Pty Ltd has a large client base, including DIER, TasRail, local councils and private clients. Since our inception in 1994 we have constructed or effected repairs to several hundred timber bridges.

Existing Timber Bridges in Tasmania

Tasmania has more than 6000 bridge structures. Over half of these bridges are timber, and many are approaching the end of their lifespan and will need to be replaced in the next few years – a lot of the timber bridges are currently under load limits, in some cases down to 2 tonne. Our current estimate for the projected requirement for bridge replacements is 12-14 structures per annum state-wide. Many of these structures are on low-traffic rural roads, and often provide access to only one or two properties, which is an additional driver for the need for the cheapest viable bridge.

We understand that local councils would generally prefer to replace all bridges with new concrete structures; however the cost of a new concrete bridge is approximately *triple* that of a timber bridge. Under current funding this would not be viable.

Timber bridges provide a cheaper alternative to concrete or steel structures, are relatively quick to erect and allow local Councils to continue with an ongoing maintenance and replacement programme.

Maintenance and Replacement of existing Timber Bridges

Regular maintenance of the timber components of a single-lane timber bridge 10-20m long includes:

- Replacement of deck runners every 5 years – 3.5-7m³ of sawn timber required
- Replacement of decks every 10 years – 6-12m³ of sawn timber required
- Total bridge replacement every 20-30 years – 10-20m³ of sawn timber required plus good-quality logs for beams and piles

Summary

Limiting or precluding access to good-quality hardwood timber is likely to:

- Increase maintenance costs of existing bridges
- Escalate the cost of bridge replacements for clients by a factor of 3
- Limit the number of bridges replaced annually due to increased costs

Please contact the writer should you wish us to provide further information; we would be pleased to make ourselves available to discuss any aspect of this submission.

Yours faithfully,
TasSpan Pty Ltd

Not signed – transmitted electronically
John Weller
Managing Director