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30th May 2011

Mr Tom Wise
The Secretary
Legislative Council Sessional Committee Government Administration A
Parliament House
Hobart, TAS, 7000

RE: To inquire into and report upon:

1. The impact of the proposed transition out of public native forest management and harvesting in Tasmania.

These terms of reference are so broad I cannot possibly hope to do them justice. So instead I'll opt for a ridiculously brief response. First some background:

- I'm a professional forester with 20+ years experience in the industry in Tasmania.
- I have just completed a PhD at UTas in blackwood genetics and wood quality. I'm now one of the many unemployed in the forest industry, due largely to poor Government policy and industry isolation and arrogance.
- I believe the forest industry in Tasmania, and Australia, is hopelessly misguided and poorly managed. This is due to the historical and continuing domination of the industry by State government forest agencies that are neither commercially competitive nor socially supported. The New Zealand government got out of the forestry business (including shutting down native forest logging) 20 years ago, and the industry there is now flourishing.
- Unlike most of the submissions to date, I only see positive outcomes from transitioning commercial forestry out of public native forest. There will be short term pain no doubt, but the long term will see better things;
- Not transitioning out of public native forest will result in even more pain over a much longer time. The forestry wars will continue, with continuing damage to our social and political institutions; and the forest industry will continue to wallow and flounder as it fails to compete in real commercial markets.
- Continuing to treat our public native forest as a cheap low-value commodity does nobody any favours.
- You might find my blackwood growers cooperative proposal of interest. <http://tasmaniantimes.com/index.php?/weblog/article/proposal-for-a-tasmanian-blackwood-growers-cooperative>. If the forest industry operated under real commercial conditions, this cooperative would have arisen decades ago.

Instead the New Zealanders and Chileans are now way ahead of us,
successfully growing Tasmania's timber icon in plantations.

The forest industry really is hopeless. It needs serious reform. Does the Tasmanian Government have the will power to do this? I doubt it, but I'm always prepared to be surprised. Good luck!

Sincerely,

Dr. Gordon Bradbury.