

Fine Timber Tasmania Inc.

The Hon. Greg Hall, MHA

Dear Greg

12th April 2011

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the process and your inquiry.

Please find attached a brief background of Fine Timber Tasmania Inc and our concerns with the Statement of Principles and potential affects on special timber supply.

Yours sincerely

Mark Leech
Secretary
Fine Timber Tasmania Inc
mleech@iinet.net.au
+61 428 973 965



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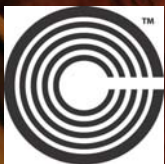
Fine Timber Tasmania is a not-for-profit association, with membership reflecting all components of the special timber supply chain; growers, processors, makers and retailers.

It is the owner of a Chain of Custody certificate, certified to AS4707 and recognised under the Australian Forest Certification Scheme. This provides an assurance of the legal and sustainable origin of logs, being a key selling point for high value timber products.

The FTT Chain of Custody is managed on behalf of Fine Timber Tasmania Inc by Tasmanian Quality Assured and independently audited by Global Mark, an assurance of quality and integrity. The system is growing in acceptance and now has the main special timber processors either as licencees accredited to use the system or applicants. It covers national and international markets supplied by Britton Bros, Corrinna Timbers, McKays, Tasmanian Special Timbers and Island Specialty Timbers. It is present in high profile sites such as The Design Centre Tasmania and the Salamanca Market where a majority of woodcraft stalls have applied to become licencees. It is becoming a requirement of entry into discerning markets within Australia and internationally.

Furniture manufacturers, designer makers and other commercial users are joining as the system grows in acceptance as an assurance that wood purchased or within product is legally sourced from sustainably managed forest certified to the Australian Forest Certification Scheme.





Statement of Principles: Concern

The views and opinions of Fine Timber Tasmania, reflect those of many users of Tasmanian Special Timber.

There has been significant recognition of Tasmania internationally through our unique special timber. Tasmania's forests are home to some of the world's most precious and beautiful timber species which have an iconic association with the State. They are part of Tasmania's unique brand and are highly regarded both within Australia and throughout the world for their decorative and other specialised applications.

They are part of Tasmania's history and its future, having social and economic significance for Tasmanians that is much greater than the relatively modest volume harvested each year. The Tasmania Wood Design Collection has gained international recognition and is a show case of excellence in design and use of our special timber.

Any further reduction in the area of all native forest for wood production is a concern for special timber users. The majority of the "iconic" special timber: myrtle, sassafras, leatherwood, celery top, come from rain forest or the understorey of tall wet eucalypt forest. Blackwood comes from many forest types including the blackwood rich swamp forest types of the far NW. Huon Pine is a special case and is only available from a very restricted source of historically logged forests, Teepookana Plateau, dam and flood salvage material.

The TCFA increased the reservation of HCV Old Growth (tall eucalypt) to approximately 80%, 973,000 ha leaving 20% to be managed for multiple values including wood production. Non clearfelling silviculture, variable retention, has been developed to manage the majority of the tall eucalypt. Minimal area harvesting has been designed by a community based design group to harvest in the Special Timber Management units.

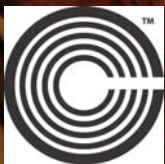
Reduction in native forest harvesting will as a minimum decrease the volume of special timber available and increase its cost to the user. Contraction to a special timber only native forest harvest will make special timber uneconomic for all, the managers, harvesters, processors and users.

It is vital that special timber is available around the state in concert with the regional location of special timber users.

The Statement of Principles

There are many elements of the SOP that cause concern for the ongoing sustainable supply of commercial volumes of quality affordable special timber.

- General Wood Supply: any reduction will impact
- HCV Forests: any further reduction will significantly impact
- Transition: transitioning out of native forest will have disastrous impacts
- Industry: Special Timbers provide a signature for the forest industry.
- Specialty Timbers: Must be sustainable, quality, affordable, available
- Communities Impacted: High cultural, social and economic impact across the State
- Tourism: direct impact, as special timber strongly associated with Tasmania, The Brand.
- Certification: Fine Timber Tasmania Chain of Custody



The Sector

Given the already limited availability of special timber rich native forests any further reductions will put at risk the significant gains made in developing Tasmania as an Island of excellence, a design lead island.

Current special timber wood supply supports

- 2,000 people employed in Tasmania's woodcraft sector,
- 8,500 people using special timber as a hobby or semi-commercially.

Milling and processing: \$17.25 mill.

- 31 enterprises,
- 160 people

Designing and production: \$39 mill.

- 250 enterprises
- 1,750 people

Retail, galleries, tourist attractions, accommodation and market stalls: \$14 mill.

- 140 people

(Farley et al 2009, A Review of the Tasmanian Woodcraft Sector)

The review demonstrates clearly that Tasmanian special timber is:

- culturally very significant with 2.6% of Tasmanians involved, 37% higher participation than the national average.
- socially and economically very important from a relatively small volume of wood.
- value added through design, making, manufacturing and marketing excellence.
- Chain of Custody support for wood sourced from legal and sustainably managed certified forests.

Special Timber Management

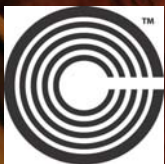
Forestry Tasmania's Special Timber Strategy has provided for a strong, robust and sustainable Special Timber supply supporting a special timber using industry including processors, timber merchants, furniture manufacturers, designer makers, craft makers/manufacturers, hobbyists and retail.

The Special Timber Strategy is a comprehensive plan aimed at producing a long term supply of special timber applying appropriate silviculture, trained and accredited contractors improving utilisation, recovery, processing and marketing. The development of Fine Timber Tasmania's Chain of Custody is an integral component of the success of the strategy.

Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement, TCFA has resulted in special timbers production (sawlog and craftwood) declining from 22,390 cubic metres in 1999/2000 (Brueckner Leech 1999) to approximately 12,500 cubic metres in 2008/09.

The reduced areas of native forest containing special timber has increased the cost of access, harvest and added to the cost of material supplied. Further reductions will make the limited volumes uneconomic to harvest and process.

Any further reductions in the limited area available for special timber production will jeopardise the strategy and the ready availability of quality material around the State.



Huon Pine: A Special Case

The area of Huon Pine available for harvest is so minimal that any further reduction will threaten the viability of this iconic wood. Huon Pine was neglected in the RFA and there is potential to enhance the area available rather than reduce it. Addition of cutover forests between Queenstown and Strahan to the cutover production area of Teepookana Plateau would add considerably to its commercial sustainability. Biological sustainability has been established with all areas “salvaged” (ie old logs on the ground) regenerated by planting and natural regen.

More than 85 per cent of Tasmania's Huon pine is already contained within the Statewide reserve system. The main area for production is the Teepookana Plateau, south of Strahan, an area heavily cut over during the first half of the 20th century. The objective is to maximise the recovery of useable timber and restore harvested areas so that they remain as Huon pine forest.

Summary

Tasmania's Special Timbers provide a unique palette of colour, texture and wood properties within a relatively small island, available in small volumes to the wood using sector and population.

Our Special Timbers and design excellence are internationally recognised.

The relatively small volume of special timber available is socially, culturally and economically significant.

Tasmania leads the world with its Forest Practices System, Special Timber Management Strategy, Fine Timber Chain of Custody, Tasmanian Wood Design Collection and education in design and making.

Any reduction in native forest harvesting will affect special timber availability.

Reduction in rainforest and HCV Old Growth, tall wet eucalypt forest will have disastrous consequences.

Reduction in the already small area available for Huon Pine salvage, the Teepookana Plateau, will severely impact the availability of Huon Pine.

Fine Timber Tasmania Inc is committed to a sustainable supply of available, affordable, legally sourced special timber from certified sustainably managed native forests.

Mark Leech

Secretary
Fine Timber Tasmania Inc.