

Monday, 31 December 2012

Legislative Council - Select Committee Forest Policy.

Dear Members.

We wish to pass on our appreciation to the Legislative Council for taking due time to properly consider this legislation.

We ask you to consider the following : -

- (a) The process that has lead to the proposed lock-up of a large are has not involved the public – the previous Salamanca/RFA process took 2 years and involved all interest groups and the general public, and was supposed to be the definitive report on land use. When implemented, the Green movement immediately began their next steps in their agenda and they will this time too. This is a peace process in name only – to the Green movement it is just another step towards a total extinction of the forest industry.
- (b) As one who had 30 years as a forest contractor it pains me to point out that the contractor’s views were not in the best interests of Tasmania. By far the majority of contractors were just fed up and could see Federal compensation as their best way out, - the few remaining an advantaged position in what remains of the industry.
- (c) Since 1970 the industry has adapted several times to changed market conditions and demand for different products. This process locks us into present market conditions with the existing companies. It ensures that there will be no opportunity to create new products or niche markets – nor to develop new ideas in an industry based on a renewable resource. The Political aims of the green party are over riding sensible environmental management of our forests. Forest areas that have evolved over eons of aboriginal burning practices – and therefore dependent on fire for their own regeneration – can never be properly preserved by a “lock up” management practice. This was recognised by the RFA process.
- (d) The Legislative Council should do what it can to ensure that the damage done to markets by the “Markets for Change” campaign is not rewarded, or it will become entrenched. This tactic is about to be used again in the mining industry, and is hugely detrimental to Tasmanian’s interests. There is no long term crisis in the demand for timber products – Australia remains a net importer. The present problems are due to a high Aus. dollar, the need to adjust to a requirement for different products, and the interference in our markets by green activists.

We urge the Legislative Council to do its best for the long term forest management of areas that are fire dependent for regeneration and that they can form the view that wood production and regeneration can co-exist with tourism. There was not a boom in tourism following the RFA lock ups and there will not be this time either.

It is most likely that this further lock-up will severely damage Tas. reputation in other States and re-enforce the message that we are closed to business opportunities and are content to be a state dependent on Commonwealth handouts.

- (d) The signatories may be well have worked hard to achieve an outcome – but the process is flawed because the public and thus the parliament as a whole did not take part and professional forest managers, ie Forestry Tasmania, were not given adequate input.

It may not be a bad thing if the Legislative Council rejects this bill!

How bad does Tasmanian's economy have to get before the Labor and Liberal Parties realise that they can work together on major issues to quarantine them from the worst aspects of the green movement?

Tasmania's economy depends on just 4 industries - Farming, fishing, forestry and mining are those that create the initial wealth, with all the rest recycling that money. All these primary industries are under threat from green attacks on their markets. Responding to what amounts to blackmail and treason will only entrench such behaviour in attacks on other industries.

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