

Plan to prevent 300,000ha being made into a national park

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Another twist in peace deal

By CHRIS PIPPOS

CIRCULAR Head sawmiller Glenn Britton has emerged as a key player in a deal to hand about 300,000ha of non-harvested forest to the Aboriginal community so that existing activities continue rather than it becoming a national park.

In return, the Aboriginal community would endorse Tasmanian timber products in the global marketplace.

The forestry peace deal took another twist yesterday when it emerged an alliance including Forestry Tasmania, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) and the Forest Industries Association of Tasmania, including Mr Britton, had drafted a plan for land identified for reservation as part of the forestry Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to be given to the state's Aborigines.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) drafted, the state's Aborigines would manage the land under the guidance of FT.

Premier Lara Giddings and Forestry Minister Bryan Green were first alerted to the proposal at a January 29 meeting partly organised by Mr Britton.

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Ms Giddings

It would get ownership or a long-term lease over the land, which would not include forest put aside for logging, and in return endorse Tasmanian timber products.

"All I can say is I have been involved in the initial discussions after an approach from the TAC through FT and there were thoughts put forward and we decided we would pursue, like the Tasmanian Government loan save av.



MANY TWISTS AND TURNS: Circular Head sawmiller Glenn Britton is involved in a proposed deal to give a huge parcel of non-harvested forestry to the Aboriginal community.

source and if the Aboriginal community were prepared to take them (the 572,000ha forest is of high value and manage conservation value and

Forestry Tas accused of exploiting community

ABORIGINAL Affairs Minister Cassy O'Connor has accused FT of "exploiting a vulnerable community" and potentially undermining the forest peace deal.

The Greens MP, along with her Greens Cabinet colleague, party leader Nick McKim, squarely blamed FT yesterday for trying to derail the forestry IGA.

"As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I am working with my cabinet colleagues to progress an agenda of land hand backs based on the premise that Aboriginal land should be handed back because it is Aboriginal land, not because it suits business or corporate interests," Ms O'Connor said.

"Only someone who hasn't paid attention to Tasmanian politics for the past 30 years, and particularly since the Intergovernmental Agreement was signed, could believe Forestry Tasmania is contemplating the return of forested lands to the Aboriginal community out of the goodness of its heart."



Aboriginal Affairs Minister Cassy O'Connor

untoward about the preliminary discussions that have occurred with Forestry Tasmania and the industry," Ms Giddings said.

"Contrary to reports, there has been no deal signed to hand over public land and such a proposal would need to come before government and ultimately the parliament.

"The IGA gives us the best possible chance of resolving the long-running conflict in our forests and now is not the time to be distracted