

D. White  
24 Doyle Ave  
Lenah Valley, Tasmania  
7008

The Secretary  
Legislative Council Select Committee on the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012  
Parliament of Tasmania  
Parliament House  
Hobart, Tasmania  
7000

Mr Stuart Wright

For your consideration, please find below a series of dot points which contain my own personal observations, rants and questions I implore you to seek complete and satisfactory answers to before making a final decision on the Tasmanian Forest Agreement 2012.

Respectfully, 

David White R.P.F.

- **Lack of appropriate consultation:** As a member of the IFA (Institute of Foresters of Australia) it astounds me that professional foresters have been excluded from this process. If you were going to radically overhaul the medical system would it not be reasonable to assume doctors should be consulted for input? Same with the education system and teachers? Australian Standards and professional engineers? The legitimacy of this process has to be questioned when the government has deliberately ignored and excluded expert advice from the extremely relevant body of professionals. And if the process is flawed then the outcome, no matter how desirable to people with no stake nor knowledge of forest management (i.e those who are sick of the issue) and those with single minded purpose (i.e. lock it up), needs to be scrutinised and if necessary rejected outright or modified for the greater good. As the global population expands the demand for responsible, renewable materials like wood will increase. Is increasing the amount of forest reserves in Tasmania to the tune of half a million hectares really the responsible thing to do? Or could foresters find other ways of achieving desired conservation outcomes? (Although I suspect preservation not conservation is the overarching agenda).
- **Why preservation (often mistakenly reported as conservation in the dialogue)?** In 2011 (the year of our forests) a list was published by Conservation International of the 10 most threatened forest ecosystems. Tasmania didn't rate a mention. The list is as follows:

Hotspot	Remaining habitat	Predominant Vegetation Type
Indo-Burma (Asia-Pacific)	5%	Tropical, Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests
New Caledonia (Asia-Pacific)	5%	Tropical, Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests
Sundaland (Asia-Pacific)	7%	Tropical, Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests
Philippines (Asia-Pacific)	7%	Tropical, Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests
Atlantic Forest (South America)	8%	Tropical, Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests
Mountains of Southwest China (Asia-Pacific)	8%	Temperate Coniferous Forests
California Floristic Province (North America)	10%	Tropical, Subtropical Dry Broadleaf Forests
Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa (Africa)	10%	Tropical, Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests
Madagascar & Indian Ocean Islands (Africa)	10%	Tropical, Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests
Eastern Afromontane (Africa)	11%	Tropical, Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests; Montane Grasslands and Shrublands

Why do we need to lock more forest up in Tasmania? As a species and a country, humans in Australia will continue to use trees – probably more than we do now as the population grows. If our timber isn't sourced from responsibly managed forests in the first world (because that's where people who are affluent enough have time to campaign to have their bit locked up), then we simply export the pressures and demands onto other forests of the globe. If those forests aren't in nations or circumstances where things are managed appropriately, is this agreement creating more candidates for the above list? Not once in this entire debate has peer reviewed\* science been used appropriately to show that the current zoning of production forests is compromising conservation (not preservation) outcomes. *\*[There are detailed and considered responses to the West report including questions surrounding the scope of the document that the committee should make every effort to obtain and read].*

- **Balance of trade:** How is an agreement that increases the requirement to import more timber (and timber based products) into Australia consistent with sustainability?
- **Changing goal posts:** Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification is only applied in Australia to the generic global standard. It's my understanding an Australian Standard is currently being created and debated. It remains uncertain if, though logical, the creation of a regional standard for Tasmania will follow. (Regional FSC standards occur elsewhere in hotly

contested parts of the world such as the temperate rainforests of coastal British Columbia and tend to be more rigorous – read more numerous in pages and hoops that must be jumped through - than the generic globally applicable text). Assuming the remaining production forest gets certified against the generic global standard, does not the current development of the Australian Standard and potentially a subsequent regional standard effectively allow the environmental “stakeholders” two opportunities to move the goalposts and/or re-neg on endorsement of FSC certification for the Permanent Timber Production Zone?

- **What are the Greens/ENGO’s really giving up?** Given the above dot point what exactly is the industry getting besides a reduced land base? Not certainty – Vica Bayley is on record that he doesn’t approve of current plantation management techniques. ENGO’s (HVEC, SWST, Markets for Change) have vowed to continue to protest native forest harvesting. The deal talks about “*proactive support...in markets for Tasmanian forest products*”, but fails to cite one measurable yardstick that the greens can be assessed by. Who is going to be assessing and ensuring the durability of this agreement 10 years from now? The term “Permanent timber zones” is almost amusing – what’s to stop legislation changing this again? (Think RFA). This is not a peace deal, this is capitulation to extortion. The committee needs to honestly assess how much pressure, and why, were representatives from the industry side subjected to sign a deal that seems to deliver little more than unmeasurable assurances of good faith.
- **Devil in the details:** Currently the only two organisations operating fire detection towers in the south of the state are Forestry Tasmania and Norske Skog (each of whom put logs on trucks). I note that the area to be immediately reserved includes the site of the MacGregor Fire tower. Since Parks and TFS don’t run towers currently is the intent to implement an agreement that will transfer control of the tower to an agency that won’t run it? A secondary matter begs the question how will roads needed to link production forest areas with main highways be managed if they all of a sudden run through new reserves? Has anybody got the answers to these questions and if so, are the costs and payment responsibilities clearly defined in people’s minds?
- **Government funding for the deal:** Where does it come from? The state government is apparently broke so what’s getting sacrificed to provide their contribution of additional funds? Is it worth it? Will the federal government’s contributions be offset by GST revenue reduction or some other discount? Is this going to be worth it?
- **Specialty timber zones:** In reviewing the map of specialty timber zones posted on the ABC website I note a large segment along the Clearhill Road to the east of Lake Gordon and an area north of the Gordon River Road (South of the lake) has been marked for such a purpose. Having spent a bit of time in this area I’m sceptical of the capacity of the zone to match its name: These areas have been heavily logged and currently support significant stands of eucalyptus regrowth, patches of non-commercial scrub timber and some steep rainforest gullies which would not be eligible for harvesting under the current Forest Practices Code. What ground truthing (i.e. timber cruising, **not** desktop modelling) has been conducted to ensure the areas zoned for specialty timber will throw up the required amounts of **red** myrtle (not just any old myrtle), **black heart** sassafras (not just any old white sassafras) and **clear** celery top pine (boat builders don’t want the knotty stuff)? Is the Specialty Craft and Timber Zone described in this agreement based on reality? Or is the likes

of George Harris expected to sit tight for 500 years or so until a suitable crop grows? This tenure designation needs to be sorted out before the agreement goes into place (9.b.ii) – not after the fact when core areas like the Tiger Range, untouched stands south of the Gordon River Road and Counsel Forest Blocks with known areas of specialty timbers get locked up.

- **Implications of Item 24:** Carbon farming – does this happen in the reserves or the production zones? If in the production zones what are the anticipated impacts to timber volume production? Also, is it clear in everybody's mind just how a stand replacing fire fits into the equation (i.e. does money have to be returned)?
- **Item 25 "...transition to a greater reliance on plantations":** It remains very unclear to me why there is text throughout the document talking about an increased reliance on plantations when a defined native forest estate is to be established for permanent timber production. What is also left out are the details of plantation management: Will it be acceptable under this agreement to increase Tasmania's reliance on plantation wood by continuing to grow monocultures of exotics which require high energy inputs in the form of fertilisers, herbicides, pesticides and manual stand tending operations or will such practices (easily targetable in my opinion) become the next point of dispute as Vica Bayley and others have alluded to? The environmentalists' strategy seems clear to me. Get as much native forest locked up as they can then start taking pictures of helicopters spraying plantations and launch the next campaign.
- **Item 34:** If an FPP gets revoked and the land transfers to a reserve what obligations (besides the moral aspect) exist to ensure these areas are regenerated to a high standard? (Rest assured something green will eventually grow back if left alone, but it might not be of a high forest quality). Who is going to fund it? Who is going to do it? Will roads and bridges into these areas still be around for the two or so years of game control currently practiced to get stands off and running? Will it be OK to create a seedbed by burning or conduct game control operations if certain areas get World Heritage listing? What if smoke allocations or weather don't allow for burning in desired year and the regeneration process is delayed for 12 months? Is anyone thinking about this stuff before we charge ahead with protection orders?
- **Item 45:** This item should be modified to potentially allow the release of the 395,199 ha from reservation where durability is not achieved. (Not lock it away in June into WHA listing). Otherwise the environmental agenda gets a virtual win-win situation out of the deal while industry remains heavily impacted.

#### **Items to consider going forward:**

- If the agreement/legislation is passed with amendments will this not effectively give the negotiating parties a loophole out of their obligations? "*Well we didn't agree to that...*" In which case what's the point of passing a modified agreement that nobody agreed to?
- Persons and organisations (including not-for-profit ) promoting defamatory, misleading or obviously erroneous propaganda campaigns need to be held severely accountable. Extortion techniques such as "stop buying Tasmania timber or we'll have a bunch of people dressed up as wedge tailed eagles invade your store" (eg the Harvey Norman campaign) need to be dealt with as the mafia style thuggery it really is.

- Field level protests that prevent people from going about their lawfully entitled work must be treated as the robbery it is. There is nothing “non-violent” about preventing someone from feeding, clothing and housing themselves by robbing someone of a day’s wages. In addition other government controlled agencies like Workplace Standards need to apply the full force of their powers. A climate of intolerance to workplace protests and virtually guaranteed harsh jail sentences for robbing and bullying needs to be created in Tasmania. Agencies (DIER, Workplace Standards, politicians who publicly endorse civil disobedience when it suits them) with powers to come down on these eco-terrorists need to stop being allowed to turn a blind eye.
- The above two points will serve to build investor confidence about exposure to ENGO abuse if you want to set up shop using Tasmanian timber. The high Australian dollar is not something easily influenced though it should not be regarded a deal breaker either. As an example look to see how much wood Canada (whose dollar is about on par with Australia) is moving to the States and China these days. Same first world costs of labour and safety standards – just a different social acceptance of forestry.
- Luring investment should not be done with cheap material, power or land rental discounts. Tasmania has high quality timber to offer for sawing, peeling, carving/turning and chipping and it should be sold at the premium prices it deserves. If a company can only scrape by with heavy state sponsored subsidies then the business plan is flawed and it can’t hope to survive the turbulent global economy. Businesses in Tasmania need to be robust from the get go.
- The Signatory Council should be self funded or paid only a modest stipend towards travel and accommodation as appropriate. Does anyone not see anything funny here (*read* conflict of interest) about an unelected group of representatives that have agreed the government should continue to pay their wages?