

Marie Yee - Submission to the Legislative Council – 15/1/2013

We are at a crossroads point in time, when the decisions we make today will steer our future path. The development of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement (TFA) over the past 2 years has brought those on opposing sides around a table together, representing their constituents, arguing and listening to points, amidst an atmosphere of volatility, with good will as the undercurrent. The signatories represent great people that have demonstrated working towards a common goal, 'peace in our forest' and a 'sustainable triple-bottom-line forest industry', is possible.

On one hand, the TFA represents a flawed scientific process, one where the selection of new reserves, and their 'HCV' verification, has not been science based. The proposed reservation outcome will not guarantee the conservation of Tasmania's endangered environments or biota. It will not result in the delisting or down listing of threatened species, like the majestic wedge-tailed eagle, the enigmatic masked owl, the unique swift parrot or the declining Tasmanian devil. It will not stop or reduce the risk of landscape megafire, which poses the greatest threat to Tasmania's native forest, its biota, industry and community.

However, what the TFA does possibly provide is 'breathing space' and hope. Vital breathing space for good will to renew itself, after having been eroded by 30 years of forestry debate bickering. We have bickered, and as we have done so, energy has been diverted away from working positively together. We have engrossed ourselves in adversarial politicking, scaremongering, falsifying truth and sabotage. Anger has grown deep, and people have suffered.

The Tasmanian people now need to come together, to capitalise on our environmental awareness and social wealth, to forge a future within our resource constrained, global warming, village. For that to happen, we need durability amongst the community, not just amongst the signatories. For this reason, the TFA is still lacking. The TFA does not currently provide a mechanism for good will to swell within the grass roots of our community. Nor does it protect us from the forests' greatest threat, a landscape megafire, which is long overdue. Until it does, the durability of the TFA remains questionable, and we waste precious time.

What is missing in the TFA is the opportunity for 'loggers', 'greenies', politicians, farmers, nurses, shopkeepers, teachers, librarians and all others to work together, to work on a common goal of ecological sustainability. For example, this goal could be understanding and preparing ourselves for the next landscape megafire. For this to happen, TFA would need additional clauses (in bold), such as

i)) New Clause under Conservation outcomes

New Clause: The Signatories call for a properly funded, as outlined in the Funding Schedule, landscape fire management plan for Tasmania's forest, including parks system, to support the outcomes of this agreement

ii) Amend Clause 42 (amendments in bold)

Clause 42: All elements of this agreement should be reviewed as part of each durability report, with key elements to be considered including progress with recognition of the agreed vision in legislation, implementing the reserve gazettals; **development of a landscape fire management plan**, achievement of wood supply commitments including

specialty timbers; agreed transition plan and its implementation; short, medium and longer term residue solutions; ongoing public and proactive support for the outcomes of this agreement, including in markets for Tasmanian forest products; support for the recommendation that governments assess the World Heritage nomination; adequate progress with the achievement of certification, adequate and satisfactory outcomes in respect of this agreement, including but not limited to the clauses about Institutional Arrangements for Parks and Production Forest Management; equitable implementation of the industry restructuring and assistance packages; and support by governments for implementation of this agreement.

iii) Update Funding Schedule accordingly to include new landscape fire management plan initiative.

Until there is an opportunity for opposing sides to work together, there still lies the undercurrent of mistrust, and therefore an inability to be proud of Tasmania's forest and the wood products it provides. It is only through working together, do we get to understand each other. Only then can progress be made in achieving greatness.

Now is not the time to review the science. It is a time to stop fighting. What is needed is peace, and for that peace to have durability.

As a former mainland environmental zealot that came to Tasmania to 'save the forests' through a science doctorate degree, now conservation planner employed by the forest industry, mother of two and Hobart resident, I see that the TFA, if with explicit mechanisms in place to facilitate good will/durability within our community, that addresses the landscape megafire threat, represents a positive step in Tasmania's future.

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