

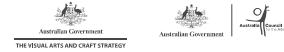
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Patrons: Pat Corrigan AM
Janet Holmes à Court AC
Professor David Throsby



25th January 2013

Legislative Council Select Committee on the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012

Dear Committee members

I write on behalf of some members of the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) who have brought to our attention the possible unintended consequences for the craft and design industry in Tasmania of this proposed Bill.

NAVA is the peak body representing and advancing the professional interests of the Australian visual and media arts, craft and design sector which is estimated to number 25,000 professional practitioners and over 1000 organisations. Since its establishment in 1983, NAVA has advocated effectively on behalf of the sector, provided leadership and set industry standards. It also provides a range of direct services to constituents.

NAVA does not want to comment on the nature of the Forest Agreement Bill but rather to draw attention to its potentially deleterious consequences for a modest sized but significant industry in Tasmania in terms of its reputation and influence in other areas of the economy and the social and cultural life of the community.

Tasmania has worked hard to establish a reputation for both a healthy and sustainable environment and clean food and drink but also a thriving arts and culture sector. Its wood crafts are much admired and are widely exhibited and keenly collected, not only in Tasmania but also nationally and internationally.

We understand that there are special timbers that are unique and endemic to Tasmania, and are found in limited quantities in particular areas of the native forests. They include Blackheart Sassafras, Blackwood, Celery-top Pine, Horizontal Scrub, Huon Pine, King Billy Pine, Musk, Native Olive and Tiger Myrtle. Their decorative patterns, colour and aroma are unique and highly prized by wood craftspeople. They cannot be substituted by other varieties. We understand that currently there is a Special Timbers Strategy (2010) in place which ensures small volumes are sustainably harvested in a sensitive manner.

The people who use these special timbers in their practice include sculptors, furniture designers and manufacturers, woodcraft artists and artisans, musical instrument makers and wooden boat builders, and they supply both specialist customers and the craft shops and galleries that provide highly sought after tourism and visitor experiences.

In restricting the quality and quantity of special timbers which would be available if the Bill is legislated, it seems inevitable that there would be a dramatic increase in the price of those special timbers which would be available. As an example one of our affected members estimates there would be reduction of between 60 – 80% in sustainable supply of the non-Blackwood species of special timbers.

It is estimated that these species are the basis for a manufacturing industry which employs 2,000 people full time with a further 8,500 people engage in related activities. While this is only about 2% of the total population in Tasmania, these cultural producers and the organisations that exhibit and sell their work, add substantial value to the economy, the cultural amenity and livability and the tourist attraction of the state. As examples the Design Centre in Launceston and the Tasmanian Wood Design Collection have earned international recognition as centres of excellence.

ACTION

The proposal we put is that if this legislation is to go ahead, the Tasmanian Government should:

- i) make a new and on-going commitment to guarantee supply of special timbers to Tasmania craft and design practitioners; and
- ii) subsidise the cost of these timbers so that the selling prices of practitioners' products will not be affected by the change.

We ask that you give serious consideration to the consequences of your decision on Tasmanian artists and artisans and ensure the viability of their on-going practice, not only for their own benefit, but also for the cultural life of all Tasmanians and attraction for visitors to the state.

Yours sincerely



Tamara Winikoff
Executive Director