



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Media Release

Thursday, 21 July 2011

High level independent report appears to fall on deaf ears

The Chairman of the Legislative Council Committee, which is the only independent investigation of the Statement of Principles process, has slammed the Government for failing to act on the report.

Committee Chairman, Greg Hall said the report called for a halt to the Statement of Principles process until a number of fundamental criteria are met.

“We are now in a situation where the future of the forest industry in Tasmania is changing on a day to day basis, yet the Government appears willing to sit on the sidelines and let unelected and unrepresentative groups decide the fate of one the state’s most vital industries,” Mr Hall said.

“Despite public assurances that the report by the committee would be examined in detail, it appears the Government has pushed it aside in their desperation to maintain office.

“This is not good enough, the Statement of Principles is not an agreement on transition but rather a set of principles agreed by the signatories and it is not at all clear whether transition is to be complete or partial.

“And, we are now seeing the consequences of this, with various vested interests holding the jobs of hundreds, if not thousands of Tasmanians to ransom in order to fulfill their own aims.

“Little, if any consideration is given to the views of, and impacts on, the non-signatory key stakeholders through the development of any agreement. The Statement of Principles focuses on environmental considerations to the detriment of social and economic factors.”

Mr Hall called on the State Government to urgently intervene in the process and resolve some issues raised in the committee report before allowing the process to continue any further.

“This is looking like a high speed train wreck and without true leadership from Government we can wave good bye to our timber industry,” Mr Hall said.

The Committee had recommended that there be no additional native forest reserves or any transition out of public native forests without further consideration of a number of matters, including:



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- The definition of High Conservation Value Forests is agreed;
- Those organisations not signatories to the Statement of Principles are considered;
- The future roles and responsibilities for the management of public native forests is properly considered; and
- The terms of any agreement for any transition must include decision making that balances the social, economic and environmental factors associated with the move.

Ends

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