

Members of the Joint Select Committee
Joint Select Committee on Ethical Conduct
Parliament House
Hobart
TAS 7000

O.V. & P.A. Taylor
54 West Bay Road
Rowella
Tasmania 7270

1st August 2008

Independent Investigative Body for Ethical and Accountable Government in Tasmania.

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee,

We are extremely concerned about the state of ethical governance in Tasmania.

The conduct of the State government recently, particularly with regard to events leading to the approval of the Tamar Valley Pulp mill, as well as the conduct of members of the Tasmanian parliament leave us with no confidence that our leaders are acting in our interests or for the benefit of our wellbeing.

We have no confidence in the recently established E.P.A, as we believe it will also to be neutralised if it acts against the interests of government or big business as the RPDC seems to have been over the pulp mill approval process.

An example of our personal experience is as follows;

Residing at Rowella, just over 1km. from the pulp mill site, we are at risk of severe impairment of our ability to continue living here if odours from the mill make it impossible to do so. This would also make it impossible to sell our property. Accidents resulting from the storage and manufacture of large quantities of chlorine will put our very lives at risk. Before the pulp mill was approved, we requested that legislation be included in the approval that would enable us to be compensated should this occur. We received no response or acknowledgement of our request. Instead, we were given Section 11 of the pulp mill act that indemnified all concerned from any accountability. This, in our opinion, is not only unconstitutional, but entirely immoral, unethical and corrupt.

We are in agreement with appeals for the following:

We are calling on the Joint Select Committee to establish an independent anti-corruption body with:

- ◇ At least one mainland appointment
- ◇ An independent and guaranteed budget indexed to the CPI
- ◇ Reporting to parliament, not to government.

Such a body should include both an ethics education component and significant investigative capacity, including

- ◇ The ability to engage in retrospective investigation where there is a continued impact on public policy, subject to statutes of limitations;
- ◇ Adequate mechanisms to maintain the confidentiality of investigations and protect both individuals raising allegations and individuals subject to allegations, including
 - whistleblower protection
 - the ability to conduct hearings in camera to maintain the confidentiality of investigations.

Looking forward to your response.

Yours Sincerely,

O.V. and P.A. Taylor