



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

**Media Release**  
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## **Legislative Council Committee calls halt to Statement of Principles**

A Legislative Council Committee investigating the transition out of public native forest harvesting in Tasmania has called for a halt to the Statement of Principles process until a number of fundamental criteria are met.

The report into the impact of the proposed transition out of public native forest management and harvesting in Tasmania was finalised early last Thursday prior to the release of the Kelty Report.

While the Committee can only make recommendations, the report is likely to have significant weight should the independent dominated Tasmanian Upper House be asked to consider any legislation to lock up more of Tasmania's forests.

Committee Chairman, Greg Hall said the Committee had significant reservations about the merit of transition as proposed under the Statement of Principles.

"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," Mr Hall said.

"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 said the Statement of Principles did not identify a definition of High Conservation Value Forests and there was no shared understanding about the definition.

"It follows that there is no agreed scientifically based methodology to enable proper conservation decisions to be made on proposed areas to be protected. There are serious questions about the process used by environmental non government organisations, to determine the forest, which they now say had high conservation values," Mr Hall said.

"There is no indication that the signatories have rigorously challenged the validity of the HCV forests identified by the ENGOS.



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“Certainty of a suitable wood supply was critical to the future viability of a forest industry in Tasmania, but it was entirely unproven that other industries within affected communities could substitute for forestry in the event a transition did occur.

“There are a wide range of sustainable forestry related enterprises currently reliant upon a secure native forest wood supply in Tasmania and claims that tourism related industries will provide significant future employment opportunities lack evidence to support such claims,” Mr Hall said.

The Committee found that some areas now classified as High Conservation Value Forests had been harvested a number of times for more than a century while other areas had been harvested in more recent times.

Mr Hall said while some forest enterprises will be able to move out of public native forests, they will need to be given sufficient time, which is estimated to be up to 30 years if an alternate wood supply is available.

The Committee also raised questions around the economic value of carbon in forests, which was yet to be determined, as is the impact such a move would have on the rating revenue of some Councils.

“There are significant costs and responsibilities associated with the management of existing public native forests and reserves and the implications of infrastructure, wild fire and other community obligations are yet to be addressed,” Mr Hall said.

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:

- 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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