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4th January 2013

To: Legislative Council Select Committee on the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012
Parliament House
Hobart,
Tasmania, 7000
By email to the member's email address and to: tfacommitee@parliament.tas.gov.au

First Submission Regarding: The Tasmanian Forests Agreement

Dear Legislative Council Select Committee,

We are writing for a number of reasons and this letter is of a preliminary nature.

We signal our intention to make a more detailed submission regarding the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012 and The Tasmanian Forests Agreement.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide answers to any questions you may have regarding our submissions and/or any further information you may require. However we would like to put in a plea for regional hearings. We are situated between Launceston and Devonport and both cities are reasonably accessible to us.

As you know this Legislative Council Select Committee inquiring into the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012, legislation is intended to enliven the TASMANIAN FOREST AGREEMENT 2012.

We are thus writing because in reviewing the material presented on your website at: <http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ctee/Council/Forests.htm> we have come to the unfortunate conclusion that the document titled: TASMANIAN FOREST AGREEMENT 2012 and dated the 22nd November 2012 is incomplete. We have also been unable to find some of the documents referred to in that Agreement.

In particular the agreement refers to Map A, Map B, Map C and Map D. It is clear from the structure of the Agreement that Maps A to D form a fundamental part of the agreement. We cannot see how the Agreement has validity when it is missing key parts of itself. We consider that a complete agreement means one where all the components or schedules or maps referred to in the agreement are included. This seems to be especially important in this day of electronic documents.

We do not discount the possibility that the agreement didn't have the maps and other parts of itself at the date of signing. Perhaps they have been provided to either the Government or the Legislative Council but have not been put on the website.

We have downloaded the Agreement off your website and noted in the properties section of that document: "*author Phill Pullinger*". We note this is not the same author as the documents on the Tasmanian Government website. The properties for that document state "*author I-woodberry*". Thus there seem to be two versions of the Agreement in circulation. Perhaps one is just a scanned version but in any case we seek clarification of that matter too. By the way neither document has the maps and other schedules.

We believe the maps referred to in the Agreement should somehow be found and loaded onto the Legislative Council website, regardless of whether they were included in the agreement on the 22nd November 2012 or not.

Please note: We have been able to find two versions of Map A and one of Map B elsewhere on the internet but are unsure whether these maps are the correct ones. We have not been able to find Maps C and D anywhere. Of the two versions of Map A we have found we note that one is dated 22-11-2012 and the second one states it has been modified post that date.

We make the point that it is rather hard for the public and indeed any stakeholder to make comment about an agreement and over maps that may not even yet exist or are still subject to change.

We also make submission that the timeline for public submissions to the Legislative Council Select Committee on the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012 should be extended to allow a reasonable amount of time for interested parties to consider the relevant mapping once all the parts of the Tasmanian Forests Agreement 2012 have been uploaded to the website.

Whether such maps (A to D) potentially created after the Tasmanian Forests Agreement 2012 was signed are a part of that Agreement is something we will address further in a later submission.

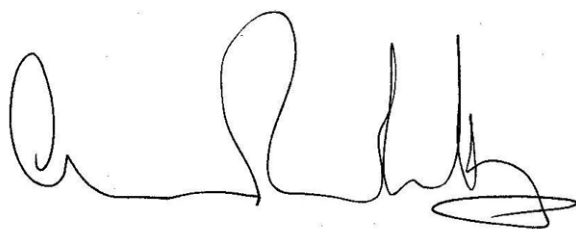
Conclusion

For over two and half years a genuine engagement with the Tasmanian public has not occurred and genuine public involvement process has unwisely been avoided. A new, comprehensive, inclusive and transparent process from here on in is essential. We note this is not a reflection on the Legislative Council.

In our view this legislation, the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012 (No. 30), in its current form, will not deliver peace for Tasmanians or Tasmania's forests, even if you also consider the commitments made in the Tasmanian Forests Agreement 2012.

We hope you have found our thoughts helpful and that you find benefit in our submission. We await your action over this matter and hope to participate fully in providing information to the Legislative Council's Select Committee.

Andrew Ricketts

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Ricketts', with a stylized, cursive script.

Convenor

The Environment Association (TEA) Inc is a not for profit, volunteer based, regional environment community association and a stakeholder in this process. TEA has a long-term interest in environmental and social outcomes in our region, Northern Tasmania, particularly in forest conservation and forestry issues. The Environment Association has worked in the public interest since its inception in 1990. As one of only two rural based environment centres in Tasmania, The Environment Association (TEA) is a long-term independent stakeholder in any resolution to the complex and divisive forestry conflict in Tasmania.

TEA is not represented by any other conservation organisation, formally or informally, including the three ENGO conservation organisations that signed the IGA. Accordingly we consider it vital to put our position.