

16<sup>th</sup> January 2013

Members of the Select Committee  
Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012

## TASMANIAN FORESTS AGREEMENT

Dear Members,

As Mayor of Meander Valley Council I seek your consideration of this submission in relation to the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012.

Meander Valley Council, like many communities around Tasmania will be affected by the passing of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement Legislation.

Meander Valley Council has several questions with respect to a number of matters. We consider the Legislative Council Committee the most appropriate forum where these matters can be raised and answers provided.

These are:

1. What are the exact boundaries of any new reserves within the Meander Valley Local Government Area?
2. What will the status of the proposed new reserves be (e.g. National Park etc.)?
3. What will be the extent and limitations of any activity, commercial and recreational, within new reserves?

We understand that forests being placed into new reserves are being done so to prevent and/or limit future logging activity. We consider that any new reserves should be pragmatic in the approach to allowing other commercial activities (e.g. Tourism) to ensure we maximise any economic transition opportunities.

4. The Agreement sets out four Production Area classifications. What are the activities that can be undertaken within the proposed Production Areas?
5. Does the Bill and associated legislation consider the financially negative rate impact on Councils that the declaration of reserves will have on land which is currently ratable but will/may not provide rate income under the proposed changes?

It is estimated (subject to provision of detailed mapping) that the proposed changes will reduce Meander Valley Council's rate income by \$168, 000 annually. This will have a significant impact on our Council's ability to maintain current service levels to our communities.

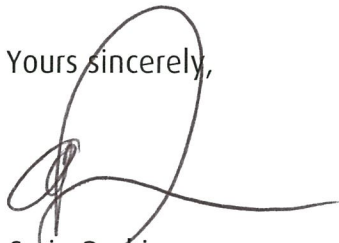
6. Given the information in 5 above, does the Bill and associated legislative changes address the compensation for rate losses to local government and more specifically Meander Valley Council?
7. Will the proposed new forest reserves qualify for carbon credits? If this the case will any revenue derived from carbon credits be used to replace lost rate revenue as detailed in question 5?
8. To what extent will any new forest reserves will be maintained, both to manage fire risk and with the maintenance of infrastructure such roads, bridges, walking tracks and other visitor services?

These are considered important assets within our region for existing recreational and tourism activities. It should be noted that when a number of tracks and bridges were damaged through floods in December 2011, the impact on access for both recreational and tourism uses was noticeable.

9. What if any, future plans are there to extend the nature of the agreement to private forest landholdings, and what is the impact this agreement will have on current private forest activities?

Representatives of Meander Valley Council will be made available to the Select Committee to clarify any issues Council has raised or provide additional information which will help to inform any areas associated with the Committee's deliberations.

Yours sincerely,



Craig Perkins  
**Mayor**

