

Wednesday January 16th 2013

Secretary

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From:

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To:

The Legislative Council Select Committee looking into the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012

Dear Members of the Legislative Council

We currently operate a family owned saw mill at Mole Creek. The saw mill provides income for 3 families, and has done so for over 20 years.

The demand for good quality Tasmanian Oak timber has been strong for as long as we have been operating, and I anticipate it will stay this way in the future.

That is why we do not support the IGA, because we feel that enough of Tasmania is already locked up, and managed properly, that means good selective logging practices, as forests need to have the older trees taken out to let the young regrowth trees become the next generation of sawlogs. All Tasmanian people, including saw millers, will be able to access quality sawlogs and speciality timbers for many generations to come, as Tasmania is known world wide for its varied and quality timbers.

We might be only a small saw mill, but our size serves the community well, as anyone can come into our mill and order one piece or 1000 pieces of timber. In the past many small country saw mills like ours, had to close down due to the lack of availability of saw logs. So, if we keep locking up our forests and cutting back the saw log volumes, the future of our sawmill might also be in jeopardy and we may end up having to close down as well.

I understand some saw millers wish to exit the industry and money should be made available to those wanting to do so. This will put less strain on timber resources assuring long term viability for those who choose to remain within the industry. I believe there is no need to

continue locking up any more forests as there are already enough protected land reserves in the state, to sustain both the forest and tourism industries.

Since the forest debate started and many logging contractors left the industry, the impact on our small community has been quite noticeable. People have left the town to find employment, as the forest industry used to be a big employer in the community.

The school has seen numbers decrease and faces possible closure if this trend continues and all businesses, including the garage, hotel and supermarket are feeling the flow on effects of people leaving the town. There are currently over 20 houses for sale in the town, a large number for a small town.

In closing, this is my story, our business and town is only one of many stories in many towns across the state that have been affected by locking up the forests. If the IGA goes ahead with less timber available, many more will be negatively affected.

Our small towns and rural communities are an important part of what makes Tasmanian such a wonderful place to live, to raise a family and for tourists to visit.

Thank you for your time in reading this, and if you would like to meet with me to discuss my submission, I would be happy to make myself available.

Kind regards
Todd Blair
Partner