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**Individual Submission to Legislative Council Select Committee  
Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill 2012**

**Personal introduction**

31 years Service with Forestry Tasmania commenced as a Cadet Forest Ranger in 1968 and accepted a voluntary redundancy as a Senior Tech Forester in 1999. Worked extensively in Native Forests including STMU's, Radiata pine plantations and with Eucalypt plantation development.  
Interests: Gardening and Natural landscape management.

**General introduction**

I have followed the course of the talks between Industry groups and the ENGO's over the past two years, to date I cannot see any valid reasons why 500,000 ha of State Forest should be transferred into permanent Reserves!  
The Tasmanian RFA 1997-2017 forms the legislative basis for State Forest including Forest Reserves.

**Wood Supply**

The Jonathon West Verification Report has brought with it a number of surprises the main one being the reestablishment the minimum supply of high quality Saw log, Specialty timbers and Peeler logs.

The volumes figures are a reminder that future forestry management will have to do better with determining sustainable yields or result in further reductions in timber allocations either by the 2017 RFA review and again leading up to the term of current Wood Supply contracts by 2027!

During the Peace Talks it became obvious in discussion that a part of future Wood Supply could not be sourced by the use of pruned E Nitens plantation wood planned by FT to commence in 2020.

FIAT discussed the issue in great detail; Chairman Glenn Britton had extensive knowledge from trials that showed only mediocre timber could be sawn.

I am well aware of trials conducted by former forester and FIAT researcher PJ Bennett through CRC Forestry who came to a similar conclusion.

From my knowledge all eucalypt timber needs to be mature 80- 90 years to cut high quality select grade marketable timber.

It may be possible managed plantation wood past 2050, should take on more suitable mature timber properties similar to those in a native forest setting!

The loss of the woodchip industry as the end of integrated logging has brought about a number of new challenges for forest management.

From what I understand the move into middle age regrowth coupes for Ta Ann peeler logs has created a mix new forest management problems.

Opening up of these coupes almost exclusively for peeler logs is compromising the availability of future of high quality saw log that should be left to grow onto maturity to produce future high quality forest products.

The Ta Ann factor is a very sensitive issue!

FT and the Tasmanian Government has fostered a relationship that is costing the taxpayer dearly, has provided more than its share of infrastructure, by means of roading into new coupes and day to day administration with no hope of recovering costs via pitiful royalties.

Markets for Change led by Peg Putt had more to do with Ta Ann's market downturn for the local laminate product not FT's Wood Supply. There has been no attempt by the company to utilize the State extensive plantation estate or pursue private property resource.

Any compensation applicable for Ta Ann must be subject to a full appraisal of the full costs of FT's commitments to service the Wood Supply from day one.

I have no major concerns re Wood Supply to long term local saw millers including Specialty timber harvest volume readjustments including buy back proposals if that remains a part of any agreement!

Both Eucalypt and Specialty Timber Supply is dependent on the entire areas of current State Forest area being available, there is no realistic compromise that can be achieved by land handovers.

Remaining small wood chipping operations: Artec and a part of the Neville Smith Timbers Group both based at Bell Bay, I believe source wood from private property and State Forest nearby!

### **Fire Management**

Currently FT is faced with a burden of outstanding unburnt coupes that need regeneration treatment throughout the State. I would strongly advise that FT during this current autumn be given some dispensation from EPA smoke restraints in order to achieve its full commitment of burns to reduce the chances of future wildfire spread.

FT MUST REMAIN as a Fire Manager with its responsibility protecting all existing commercial native forests including Forest Reserves under its control.

FT forms an essential part as an Inter Agency Wildfire control and Fuel Reduction partner with TFS, PWS, and all private property owners within One Mile of its boundaries.

Norske Skog is currently the only known private organization that actively manages fire fighting crews available for limited inter agency use.

It is becoming more evident that the drier Tasmanian landscape requires increasing better fire management practices coming from all levels of land ownership.

Recent moves by NRM/ Senator Wish Wilson and CEO Mike Brown to instigate Fuel Reduction strategies should result in a further requirement for experienced FT and a renewed opportunity for Forest Industry employees affected by the forestry downturn.

## Forests versus Reservation

To facilitate the opportunity for a viable forest industry within Tasmania, most importantly it is obvious that the State Forest estate remains intact.

The FPA with its Special Values Specialists in area of Nature Conservation, fauna, flora, geology, aboriginal heritage and landscape as some of the examples, are the most appropriate body to decide on any further reservation of land, not the unelected representatives of conservation groups, namely the ENGO's.

Given that the ENGO's are demanding up to 295 forest lots be transferred into Permanent Reserves is an ideology beyond belief?

During my career in forestry and over a period of decades FT has strived to improve its land boundary delineation with State or Private neighbors in order to safe guard its forests from illegal cutting of timber and better choice for fire protection for commercial forest land management.

The transfer of up to 295 forest lots into Reservation scattered throughout State Forest would bring about too many indifferences with Land Management strategies as well as the obvious shortcomings of suitable forested land remaining for Wood Supply opportunities.

## Conclusion

I hope that the information I have provided is useful for the Select Committee in deciding the best way forward to ensure that a native forest industry remains and FT management reflects that objective.

The content of my submission is available to any member of the public who may wish to view it.

If there are any queries you can contact me  
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Yours faithfully

Mr. RC Halton

