



tasmanian conservation trust inc

Media Release

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Kelty Report: TCT claims scientific errors could leave 50% of Tasmania's important forests unprotected

The Tasmanian Conservation Trust today claimed that Bill Kelty's 'Tasmanian Forests: Interim Report for Consideration' (the Kelty Report):

- scores high marks for calling on governments to make a commitment to reservation of mainly wilderness forests on public land; but
- has made serious scientific errors which could lead to more than 50% of Tasmania's high conservation value forests, important for biodiversity, unrecognised and unprotected; and
- fails in regard to the Gunns proposed pulp mill, recommending a pointless assessment.

"The TCT supports the Kelty Report's call for a commitment by governments to deliver formal legislative protection for public forest reserve proposals, however Mr Kelty has made a serious scientific error by assuming all high conservation value forests have been identified in this proposal."

In October 2010, the TCT pointed out that, while the Forests Statement of Principles promised an outstanding outcome for protection of forests on public land, mainly in wilderness areas, it failed totally to address the need for conservation of native forests for their biodiversity values – almost all biodiversity priorities are to be found on private land.

"Despite the TCT raising these serious concerns with Mr Kelty, he has made a serious scientific error by excluding biodiversity from his definition of high conservation value forests", said Mr McGlone. "This error could lead to more than half of Tasmania's high conservation value forests, important for biodiversity, not being protected.

"If the areas which are most important for threatened species and threatened forest ecosystems are not protected, then it is laughable to be talking about producing an agreement to resolve the conflict over Tasmania's forests.

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“Despite the Prime Minister requesting a definition of high conservation value forests in her 7 December 2010 media release, Mr Kelty has been unable or unwilling to address this crucial scientific question.

“It is finally time for scientists to play a role in the Forests Statement of Principles, starting with determining a definition of high conservation value forests.”

The Prime Minister Julia Gillard, in her 7 December 2010 media release, announced that, as part of the proposed due diligence assessment of the Tasmanian forestry industry, there is need for clarification of 'detail and definitions contained within the Statement of Principles including High Conservation Value forests'.

While the TCT is gratified that Mr Kelty recognises serious and unresolved community and conservation group opposition to the Gunns Tamar Valley pulp mill, his proposed assessment of the assessment process appears pointless.

“Gunns has all the required permits from the state and Australian government so, unless these are revoked, there is nothing for Mr Kelty's process to assess.”

Further comments:

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