



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Gunns' Pulp Mill Integrated Impact Statement Lacks Basic Pollution Monitoring Detail** (For Immediate Release)

Pollution from effluent dumped via an ocean outfall in Bass Strait is one of the major concerns about Gunns' proposed pulp mill. An obvious way to reduce public concern would be to have a monitoring program that would identify problems due to pollution before they become too bad to do anything about them.

It seems incredible, but Gunns' Integrated Impact Statement does not provide a complete monitoring program available for assessment. A proper consideration of the proposed mill's environmental impacts requires that a full monitoring proposal is available for public scrutiny.

"If there needs to be additional work done by the Tasmanian Government or Gunns before a complete monitoring program can be developed, then that's what has to be done. A monitoring program should be available right now so that comments can be provided to the Resource Planning and Development Commission", says Jon Bryan from the Tasmanian Conservation Trust.

"The lack of details on a pollution monitoring program means that it is impossible to make a proper assessment of whether Gunns or the Tasmanian Government are serious about monitoring and regulating this environmental impact."

"Persistent organic pollutants such as dioxins and furans or other organochlorines are one of the most worrying forms of pollution that might be found in the effluent. These have the potential to accumulate in the ecosystem and contaminate marine mammals and other marine life. Seafood may also be polluted. The IIS does not even propose monitoring for these toxins in the fur seals that live near the proposed outfall, although top order predators such as these are most likely to suffer and could provide early warning of problems."

**MORE FOLLOWS:**

"The claim is often made by mill proponents that the pollutants in the effluent will be highly diluted and therefore safe. This is completely misleading when you are talking about persistent pollutants that may build up in the environment over years. The dilution of the effluent is much less important than the amount of pollution that actually gets into the environment and what happens to it once it gets there."

The World Health Organization website states that: "long-term, low-level exposure of humans to dioxins and furans may lead to the impairment of the immune system, the impairment of the development of the nervous system, the endocrine system and the reproductive functions. Short-term, high-level exposure may result in skin lesions and altered liver function. Exposure of animals to dioxins has resulted in several types of cancer"<sup>1</sup>.

The aim to develop a monitoring program only after the Integrated Impact Statement (IIS) was prepared for consideration by the Resource Planning and Development Commission is outlined in the IIS report "Monitoring" available on the Gunns website<sup>2</sup>. An Excerpt is provided below.

## ENDS

**An downloadable PDF version of this release is available from <http://www.tct.org.au/pulpr3.pdf>**

### **Further information:**

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### **References**

1. World Health Organisation website (13/9/06):

(<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs281/en/index.html>)

2. Gunns website at <http://www.gunnspulpmill.com.au/IIS/default.htm>

Excerpt: *Monitoring V4\_part4.pdf page 4-203*

"In accordance with the RPDC Emission Limit Guidelines, the monitoring program will be a multi disciplinary design that monitors the quality and condition of water, sediment, biota and ecological communities adjacent to the ocean outfall during operations. Prescriptive components of the monitoring program such as chemical and biological parameters, sampling frequency and sampling locations have not been included in the main body of the document. These components will only be implemented into the monitoring program following agreement with RPDC and DTAE once data from baseline and pre operational programs have been collated and reviewed."

Table 6 in the same document also states with regard to parameters that are to be monitored: "Chlorine compounds, including persistent organic pollutants (POPs)-to be determined in consultation with DPIWE"