

## **THE TASMANIAN PULP MILL—BELL BAY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, TAMAR VALLEY**

### **“200,000 hectares of wild native Forest”**

This quote is continually repeated by the Greens, the Wilderness Society and other opponents to the approved pulp mill for Northern Tasmania.

The claim is stated as a reason to oppose the mill and a reason to lobby banks and governments.

Yet is the claim justified?

### **200,000 ha of Native Forest**

This claim first appeared in the submissions of the Greens and the Wilderness Society to the RPDC on the Integrated Impact Statement (IIS).

Over the 25 years of the project this equates to just 8,000 hectares per year.

Section 6.2 Pulp wood supply of the Project description found in Volume 1 of the IIS clearly states on a number of occasions that there will be **no intensification of forestry operations** and that pulp wood for the mill will be sourced from wood that will otherwise have been exported as woodchips.

That means the 8,000 ha will come from existing planned harvests and represents only part of Tasmania’s native forest harvest as reflected in the last five years:

### **Current Approved harvesting of Native Forest**

Area approved (ha)

<b>Tenure</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>
Public	15,900	18,300	19,200	17,400	16,000
Private	16,100	17,100	19,600	16,900	14,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>35,300</b>	<b>38,800</b>	<b>34,300</b>	<b>30,400</b>

(Source *Sustainability Indicators for Tasmanian Forests 2001-2006*)

### **Pulp Wood from Plantations and regrowth Native Forest**

The IIS also stated that the mill’s yearly requirements of 3.2 to 4.0 million Green Metric tonne (GMt), is substantially less than the 5.3 to 6.7 million GMt per annum forecast to be available.

These forecasts for pulp wood available from both public and private land are confirmed in two reports published:

- Private Forest Tasmania’s (2005) *Tasmanian Private Property Wood Flow Estimates 2002 to 2031* (average annual supply from private land 3.8 million GMt).
- Forestry Tasmania’s (2007) *Sustainable high quality eucalypt saw log supply from Tasmanian State forest – Review No 3* (stable supply of pulp wood of 2.5 million GMt for next 20 years)

These two reports show harvest volumes that are planned regardless of the presence of the pulp mill. These volumes will still be harvested and exported as wood chip if the mill is not in production.

### **Pulp wood harvest is legal and sustainable**

Section 6.2 of Volume 1 of the IIS also details the pulp wood supply for the mill will be sourced from regrowth native forest managed under the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement and from Plantations. All harvesting is to be carried out in accordance with the forest practice code, threatened species legislation and relevant state laws and for native forests including by clearfell, selective harvesting and thinning operations.

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The IIS also states that the supply includes 0.2 – 0.25 GMt equivalent in sawmill residues and stated that the pulp logs would be sourced from a both plantation and regrowth native forests.

This was shown as:

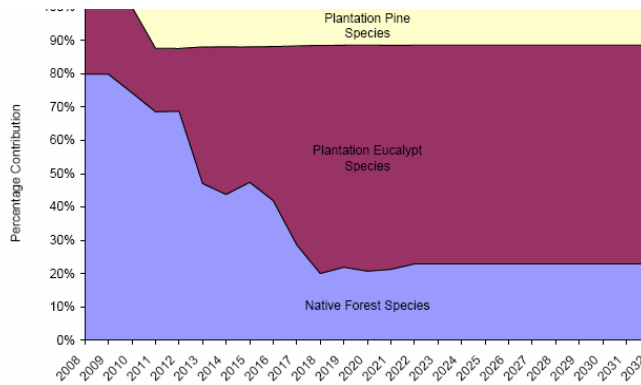


Figure 6-19 Likely Contribution over time of Pulpwood Species to Pulp Mill  
[Source: Gunns' pulpwood resource modelling]

Pulp wood log supply is 36% from native regrowth and 64% from plantation. (IIS table 6-4).

### Dodgy Maths

Both the Wilderness Society and the Green's submission quote extensively from the IIS.

Both submissions attempt to calculate an area of native forest to be harvested.

The Greens claim that the area can "be estimated to be approximately 200,000 ha over 25 years... to supply 32Mt of pulpwood."

The Wilderness Society Submission assumes

- the pulp mill consumes an average of 1.8 million tonnes of native forest a year over the life of the project.
- that this would require logging 200,000 ha of native forest.

(As the life of the project is 25 years the annual average equates to 45 million Mt.)

Starting with two very different figures (32 Mt or 45 Mt) both the Greens and the Wilderness Society can come up with the same area figure of 200,000 ha.

In later media releases the Wilderness society now claim the lesser figure of 32Mt but the area of 200,000 ha remains.

The Greens/Wilderness Society figure represents annual 8,000 ha a figure significantly less than the historic rate of area approved for harvesting in Tasmania's forests that has averaged 34,000 ha per annum since 2000.

### Sustainable Rate

As there is about 3.1 million ha of forest within the State of which 1.4 million hectares of high conservation value forest is already reserved, the Greens/ Wilderness figure represents a harvest of about 0.5% of available forest per year.

As the vast majority of the forest harvest will be regenerated to Native forest using the same species from the site, there will be no decrease in native forest either due to the planned harvest or the supply of pulp wood to the mill as part of that harvest.