

Water plantations and the pulp mill

Fact No significant impact on sustainable water supply

A CSIRO 18 month study on sustainable yield of fresh water in Tasmania finds that in 2030 after accounting for climate change and plantation development for the pulp mill:

“An expected increase in commercial forest area of 5 percent leads to a decrease in runoff of **0.3 percent**”¹

Tasmania has a mean annual rainfall of 1266 mm per year representing 47,000 GL of runoff. Tasmania has 12 percent of Australia’s freshwater resources even though it covers less than 1 percent of its total land mass.

Wrong - Grave Threat – the Greens

The Greens claimed the pulp mill would put our long term water supplies under grave threat.

“We are at risk of sending our water budget into long-term deficit at a time of confirmed and accelerating climate change.”²

Wrong - Perennial Drought – The “Expert”

Dr D Leaman, a hydrologist, featured on the ABC Four Corners ‘Lords of the Forests’ and critic of the approved pulp mill:

“The Government and the mill proponent require you to vote for a Perennial drought” and the mill will create a demand that “will exceed 750,000 ML/year³ in normal years and perhaps 1,000,000 ML/year in bad years”⁴

Wrong - Mill will stop the rain – Another “Expert”

The Tasmanian Greens using taxpayer funds commissioned Melbourne environmental consultant Aaron Gingis to report on the impact of particulate pollution on the Tamar Valley and surrounding area as part of their submission.

Mr Gingis said the ultra fine particles emitted by the mill will change the density of clouds and reduce rainfall in the north-east by up to 80 per cent.⁵

Wrong - \$6 billion lost to plantations – A lobby group

“Growing 7 million tonnes/yr of wood for the pulp mill as well as the chip export market comes at a cost of around 1100 GL/yr of water... Over 15 years, the potential value of 1100 GL/yr of irrigation water used to grow crops, is about \$8 billion. Over the same period, the total value from the same area growing trees and sold as pulpwood is around \$2 billion.”⁶

¹ CSIRO (2009) Water availability for Tasmania. Report one of seven to the Australian Government from the CSIRO Tasmania Sustainable Yields Project, CSIRO Water for a Healthy Country Flagship, Australia

² The Greens, 2006 The Tasmanian pulp mill news Edition # 5,

³ Note Water volume: A litre is the size of a milk carton, so it is normal to talk in megalitres, a million litres, or a Gegalitre a thousand ML. A ML is often equated to an Olympic size swimming pool, but this is incorrect, an Olympic pool is 50 metres by 25 metres by at least 2 metres deep or a minimum of 2.5 ML.

⁴ Leaman Geophysics, 2007, Water and the Pulp Mill proposal, Briefing Notes for Legislative councillors

⁵ ABC News on line Friday, October 6, 2006. 7:32am (AEST) Concerns pulp mill will change north-east rainfall

⁶ TAP, Mill Fact Sheet No 7, Is there enough water for a Tamar valley pulp mill?