



Identifying High Conservation Value Forests in Tasmania

Media release (2/03/2011)

Current talks about identifying high-conservation value (HCV) forests in Tasmania are seriously flawed, National President of the Institute of Foresters of Australia Dr Peter Volker said today.

The Tasmanian Statement of Principles, often labelled a “peace deal”, includes a promise to “immediately protect, maintain and enhance high-conservation-value forests identified by ENGOs (environmental non-government organisations) on public land”.

Dr Volker said the resulting talks were ignoring three key facts:

- With 47% of Tasmania in protected areas, including the Comprehensive and Adequate Reserve system identified in the 1997 Regional Forest Agreement and expanded in the 2005 Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement, Tasmania already meets the World Wildlife Fund’s (WWF) first hurdle for HCV forest protection.
- No one can look at a map and identify HCV forest as The Wilderness Society has done. It takes a detailed on-site survey to identify if a conservation value exists in a specific place. “The Forest Practices system in Tasmania is designed to identify conservation values of every hectare that is subject to forest operations,” Dr Volker said.
- Old-growth forests are not necessarily HCV forests. The WWF’s Blueprint for Tasmanian forestry said: “Forest management cannot be summarised with catchwords like ‘clearfelling’ or ‘old-growth forest’. Well-managed forestry is very complex.”*

The Institute of Foresters of Australia is not party to the Statement of Principles. Professional foresters have been excluded from the current negotiations as have the Tasmanian community.

Dr Volker said the WWF’s 2004 Blueprint for Forestry Industry and Vegetation Management in Tasmania had largely been achieved. “The WWF have shown that a well-considered and thorough examination of issues, using proper scientific processes, can lead to win-win outcomes that support a world-class reserve system as well as continued supply of high-quality timbers from native forests to support the Tasmanian community.”

He said that foresters would always seek continuous improvement which is a key aspect of the WWF’s Blueprint. “We must undertake detailed investigation to identify conservation values and then develop prescriptions to manage them,” he said.

“The Forest Practices system, plus the existing protected areas, means that Tasmania is well-placed to manage high conservation values in combination with a sustainable and productive native-forest industry.”

Dr Volker also supports the WWF statement that, “... despite the appearance of having a severe environmental impact, well-managed forestry is one of the more sustainable forms of human activity.”

*(<http://wwf.org.au/publications/TasmaniaBlueprint2004/>)

For further information please contact

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