

# The Institute of Foresters of Australia

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28 March 2012

Professor Jonathan West  
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Dear Jonathan

The Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) is deeply disappointed with the lack of consultation in regards to the work undertaken by you as part of the Independent Verification process to meet the requirements of the relevant clauses of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement of 7 August 2011.

The Prime Minister and Tasmanian Premier's Tasmanian Forest Agreement Independent Verification Group (IVG) Terms of Reference, Clause 4, "Put in place appropriate arrangements for ongoing consultation" with groups that included the IFA as noted in the Attachment A.

It would appear that with the presentation of the IVG report to Governments, you have failed to meet the Clause 4 obligation as the IFA has not been consulted and reject any notion that the conversations held, or correspondence entered into with various individuals, could be considered consultative.

The IFA first extended its offer to support the process in a letter on 30 August 2011 and on 5 September 2012 whereupon you acknowledged our offer as "very helpful. At a meeting in late November with (then IFA President) Dr Peter Volker, concerns were raised regarding the credibility and integrity of the IGA process. You stated that you were not concerned with inherent bias of members of the Independent Verification Group. On 15 December 2011, the IFA wrote to you and indicated that the inherent bias you acknowledged "increases the need for appropriate peer review and comment on technical work undertaken by members of the IVG".

Throughout this process, and through direct discussions with you, the IFA has repeatedly maintained that for the IVG to be seen as independent, the papers being prepared by the expert reference group would need to be peer reviewed in order to demonstrate that "an independent and transparent verification process to assess and verify stakeholder claims" had been undertaken as required under Clause 2.

On 13 January 2012 you agreed that a review is necessary and the IFA has the appropriate skills and expertise to provide such a review. You also agreed that an assessment of the conservation values of forests required a 'ranking' system that would differentiate between multi-use and conservation uses and management.

It appears that despite numerous offers and approaches by the IFA to provide expert, unbiased and professional technical and scientific support, and despite your assurance as recently as 24 February 2012 that the IFA would be engaged to provide peer

review of the reports, and despite an acknowledgement and agreement by you that such reviews would add value and improve the integrity to the process, you have failed to meet your obligation as detailed under Clause 2 and 4 of the TOR and undertakings to the IFA.

As a matter of urgency, would you please confirm the status of these reports, verify if they have been peer reviewed, explain why the IFA has not been consulted and why it has not been approached to provide peer reviews, and why you have failed to meet your verbal and written obligations and undertakings as conveyed to the IFA.

Yours sincerely,



Cassandra Spencer  
Chief Executive Officer