

MEDIA RELEASE



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PULP MILL NEEDS SCIENCE – NOT SCUTTLEBUTT

Gunns Limited is fed up with the ongoing malicious campaign by ill-informed pulp mill opponents who continue to deliberately mislead the public over the proposed Bell Bay Pulp Mill.

“Any person can access the Resource Planning and Development Commission’s web site to examine the stringent guidelines that have been established to build a pulp mill in Tasmania,” Gunns Limited Executive Chairman John Gay said.

“These are the guidelines that we have to prove we can meet in our Integrated Impact Statement and that is what we will do.

“We have engaged world leading pulp mill experts that are both working full time for Gunns Limited and also on a consultancy basis. They bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in pulping technology, environmental management and monitoring, engineering, construction, operations and marketing.”

Mr Gay said any suggestion that technology other than the latest would be utilised was ridiculous. “It’s like suggesting we start manufacturing typewriters rather than computers, or 1948 FJ Holdens rather than a 2005 Commodore,” Mr Gay said.

“It’s an absolute disgrace that Senators like Christine Milne that are elected to represent Tasmania and Tasmanians arrive in Canberra and denigrate our State and any proposed development.

“A Christine Milne press conference is like pressing play on an 1980s stuck record.

“Insinuations by Christine Milne that this mill will expel toxic substances are blatant lies. There are higher concentrations of organochlorines in red wine than in pulp mill effluent.

“It’s time for Tasmania to move on. It’s time for new jobs to be created to entice people back to our state and to up-skill our workforce.

“It’s also time to wait for the detailed information when Gunns Limited presents its Integrated Impact Statement later this year.”

Mr Gay said in terms of some of the recent issues that have been raised:

EPBC Referral

A revised referral was submitted to the Department of Environment and Heritage last week. This referral was submitted voluntarily by Gunns so that both the Federal Government and the public could be kept informed about the project as it is being developed. Gunns is committed to providing up-to-date information to relevant authorities and the community throughout this process.

Marine environments

Under the RPDC guidelines, no effluent can be discharged into the Tamar River. Gunns Limited has invested significant resources into studies on Bass Strait, which will be included in our IIS. Recent tests on pulp mill effluent commissioned by Gunns have shown no toxic effects on marine organisms.

Consultation

Gunns Limited has been extremely pro-active in consulting with the wider community to ensure the latest information on its pulp mill project is circulated. This has occurred through direct consultation and presentations to thousands of Tasmanians around the State, as well as through a dedicated web site, email and free telephone number 1800 265297.

Solid waste disposal area

There has been comment that Gunns is proposing to establish a toxic waste disposal site. This is not true and not allowed under the RPDC emission guidelines. The composition of solid waste for disposal from the mill must comply with the Australian and international non-hazardous waste criteria.

In many countries most of this solid dry waste, which comprises ash from burning wood and naturally occurring lime, is directly applied to agricultural land and forests as nutrient-rich fertiliser or transported to municipal waste disposal centres. Gunns Limited will investigate this fertiliser option to minimise the amount of dry material destined for the waste disposal area.

Mr Gay said this is another example of world's best technology that ensures outputs from modern pulp mills can be recycled and utilised in the natural environment.

The proposed waste disposal area will be sealed off from the ground and surface water and any rainfall infiltration will be collected and pumped back to the pulp mill for primary and secondary treatment.

“Gunns Limited wants to get on with the job of preparing its IIS for a world-class pulp mill. We will continue to keep the public informed as more of our detailed analysis is finalised.

“We are happy to take constructive ideas on board at any time.

“However, blatant lies and emotional hysteria are not assisting with communication to the public which is an essential element to the development of this project. We must remember that this project will give a major boost to the Tasmanian economy and provide career opportunities for our families well into the future.”

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