



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

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Forestry Tasmania’s atrocious environmental, economic and social record

Forestry Tasmania (FT) manages public forests (State Forest) on behalf of Tasmanians. FT controls 1.5 million hectares, or 22% of Tasmania. 1.250 million ha of this consist of “multiple-use native forest”, most of which is available for logging. Actions undertaken by Forestry Tasmania which have attracted public opposition are:

Destruction of wilderness areas and oldgrowth forests

Forestry Tasmania (FT) builds the logging roads that open up areas like the Styx, Picton, Weld, Tarkine, North-East Highlands, Great Western Tiers and Tasman Peninsula (Fortescue Bay area) to clearfelling. An opinion poll carried out by Professor Herr from the University of Tasmania in September 2001 showed that 70% of Tasmanians want these places protected from clearfelling.

Clearfelling is the dominant means of logging forests (65% of FT’s logging)

	Native forest clearfelled (ha)	Total native forest logged (ha)
1999-2000	10,700	14,300
2000-2001	10,210	17,850
Total (% clearfelling)	20,910 (65%)	32,150

Source: Forest Practices Board Annual Reports 1999-2000, 2000-2001

Clearfelling is followed by burning, which is carried out in March-April. Up to 200 burns are carried out by FT on sunny, settled days each autumn, with massive production of smoke and Greenhouse gases, and resultant adverse impacts on tourism. Clearfelling replaces huge areas with plantations or young regrowth, and prevents sustainable production of specialty timbers. FT’s current management produces an unsustainable glut of specialty timbers, much of which is wasted.

Most forests clearfelled are not regenerated to native forest – they are converted to plantation

	Native forest clearfelled (ha)	Native forest converted to plantation (ha)
1999-2000	10,700	7,800
2000-2001	10,210	6,490
Total (% conv. to plantation)	20,910	14,290 (68%)

Source: Forest Practices Board Annual Reports 1999-2000, 2000-2001

Over 90% of logs extracted from public native forests are turned into woodchips

Logs extracted from public forest (State Forest – managed by FT)

	Sawlogs	Chiplogs	Other	Total
2000-2001	431,849 t	2,608,087 t	60,564 t	3,100,500 t
%	14%	84%	2%	100%

Source: Forestry Tasmania Annual Report 2000-2001

The table shows that 84% of logs go directly to chipmills. This does not count “sawmill residues”. Of the 14% of logs that go to sawmills, about two thirds become “residues” – they are chipped, too. Hence over 90% of logs get chipped.

34% increase in logging last year = 34% decrease in profits to Tasmania

	1999-2000	2000-01
Native forests logged (hectares)	11,200	15,000
Pulpwood (woodchips) produced	2.24 million tonnes	2.61 million tonnes
Declared dividend to state (to be paid in following year)	\$8.687 million	\$5.759 million

Source: Forestry Tasmania Annual Reports 1999-2000, 2000-2001

In 2000-2001, logging increased by 34% on the previous year – but (coincidentally) profits to the state went down by 34%! We are destroying our forests faster than ever before, but getting less rate of return.

1080 poison

Forestry Tasmania is one of the state’s largest users of 1080 poison. The poison is used to kill wallabies and possums that browse on the seedlings that are planted in place of the recently destroyed oldgrowth forests. Use of 1080 in Tasmania increased by over 50% in the 10 years to 2001.

One rule for Forestry – another for everyone else

Forestry Tasmania and other parts of the industry enjoy a number of exemptions from laws that apply to other parts of the community, notably:

- Forestry Tasmania is exempt from Freedom of Information laws (we can no longer find out the price Forestry gets for its logs, for example);
- Forestry activities are exempted from Local Government Planning Schemes.

Forestry Tasmania has a \$232-million debt to the Government

In 1991, the Tasmanian Government took over the then Forestry Commission’s debt of \$272 million. In 1999-2000, that debt was reduced by \$40 million when FT sold a 50% share in its north-east pine plantations to a US-based resource company. Forestry Tasmania therefore has part-privatised part of a public resource to help pay its debts.

Permanent destruction of wildlife habitat

Replacement of oldgrowth forests with plantations or regrowth permanently destroys habitat for birds and animals that need holes and hollows in aging trees – eg pygmy possums, sugar gliders, bats, black cockatoos, owls and many other species. Potential new nesting sites for the white goshawk and the endangered wedge-tailed eagle are also destroyed