

“In Support of Progress” Newsletter

Newsletter 26

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FISHERIES

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The trawler Margiris is presently docked at Port Lincoln, in South Australia, before proceeding to Tasmania.

The debate still rages in the newspapers and over the airwaves, with prophets of doom and gloom expressing their concern regarding the so-called hoovering effect of its fishing effort, causing localised depletion, if not total annihilation of fish stocks.

The scientists who have reported that the level of quota is sufficiently low to ensure no such damage (see Newsletter 24) have been conveniently ignored, and the vessel will no doubt get a rowdy reception on its arrival.

The company's CEO, Gerry Geen, has written an article which was published in the Mercury today, and it is well worth a read (see attached).

What has also not been said is that the fishing effort by this company will be no greater than what it is already conducting. It has been fishing to an allocated quota for the last few years, and will be catching no more than the quota already allocated.

The only difference is the company will be using a different vessel to catch the fish. Protestors complain that the vessel is big. But why should that be an issue? Its nets are no different, it will only catch to its quota, it will have observers on board to ensure compliance with AFMA regulations, its range is greater, so it will catch its quota over a wider area, thus diminishing any depletion effect, and the quality of the catch will be improved due to the fact that it can process the catch onboard.

It should be a good news story.

The fact that it isn't would appear to be based on a campaign of fear and of misinformation, even disinformation, surrounding something that is "new". And of a concern that someone might be making a dollar.

How dare they?

FORESTRY

Minister Bryan Green made a Ministerial Statement in Parliament yesterday detailing the government's position regarding the breakup of Forestry Tasmania. The problem with the statement is that there is no detail. Further, there has been no consultation - with anyone, staff have no idea what is going on, in FT and in DPIPW, what land is to be transferred remains unclear, how the commercial operation will be managed is not addressed, the timing of the changes has not been considered, and as was commented yesterday, the questions keep rolling in. If these comments seem harsh, attached is the Ministerial Statement, and you can judge for yourself.

Comment has been made that the recommendations of the URS review reflect at least in part the situation presently in operation in Victoria, where the forest estate is managed by one department (Sustainability and Environment) and coupes are harvested by another (Vic Forests).

Without going into any detail about the value of an integrated management approach, which is what we have here at present, the experience of Vic Forests seeking FSC certification back in 2009 is a salutary lesson. You may recall that seeking FSC certification has been one of the drivers surrounding the Statement of Principles and the IGA discussions.

Upon application, their application was refused, because, amongst other things, they (Vic Forests) had not complied as a land manager. Even though they weren't one. And the land manager had no reason to seek certification, because they were not a commercial operation. A classic Catch 22. See attached 4 page doc, called Woodmark Report, and in particular Section 2 on page 3.

Absurdity piled on absurdity. We are entering into a time of high farce. A bureaucratic nightmare, total disruption guaranteed, with an end result that nothing will be resolved, and that commercial endeavour will be decried, and could disappear.

This newsletter is supported by Tasman Management Services.



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