

# “In Support of Progress” A Newsletter

Date: 26 September 2012

## In this issue

- 1 **The Tarkine**
- 2 **Forestry**
- 3 **Forestry 2**
- 4 **Agriculture**
- 5 **Planning**
- 6 **Coverage**

### **THE TARKINE**

It has been pointed out that one of the maps provided in the last newsletter shows the Shree interest too far to the south and too far inland (ie near Balfour). Please find attached a more accurate map.

Also, the map showing the mineral deposit zones was developed from an original provided by MRT - the Forest Types map was obtained from DPIPWE.

Campaigns are ramping up. The AWU campaign “Our Tarkine, Our Future” is now running strongly on the mainland, in response to the GetUp! Campaign.

### **FORESTRY**

Readers will be aware that the company Gunns has now been placed in receivership, and that the government has appointed Bob Annells to be the new Chairman of FT. Some reflections on these two events.

The move by Gunns to exit native forests, in order to obtain a social licence for its pulp mill, a point emphasized by its GM L'Estrange at the time the decision was taken, has been proven to be a fatal strategic move. With ramifications for employees (who have lost or will lose their jobs), shareholders (who have lost their money), and for the industry at large, who have been struggling to find alternatives for the loss of woodchip sales. And what an irony it is that Alex Marr, present manager of the Triabunna woodchip plant, refers to a failure of company management. One of their big failures was to sell the plant to the current owners!

It is also a financial loss for government, which provided significant funds as a “cash compensation” to the company for relinquishing wood supply quota, and even more funds to FT to pick up the royalties the company did not pay. Some \$34.5 million in all. Taxpayers should be concerned that the company was given such open assistance.

The banks have foreclosed on the company to protect their funds – has the government got any recourse – I think not. When governments provide funds to companies for particular purposes, they should establish certain protections in case companies go belly up. They did so in the case of the King Island Abattoir, so it is not a novel concept! As it has turned out, the payment has really ended up being a payment to the company's banks!

The receivers will move to obtain value for the creditors, which will involve the sale of the company's assets. One of those will be the approvals for a pulp mill. It could go to a foreign investor – imagine the screams then.

The appointment of Bob Annells to the position of FT Chairman was made with extraordinary alacrity, especially considering the sensitive nature of the position. One is left to wonder the processes followed by the government in regard to this appointment. Bob is also Chairman of TasRail - maybe there are some synergies to be gained from the appointment.

The appointment may assist in calming the toxic relationship between FT and the Minister. However, one suspects if the government continues with its move to break up FT the animosities will remain, and will go no way to resolve industry's concerns.

### **FORESTRY PART 2**

A significant rift has developed within the conservation movement, with the recent disclosure that the Wilderness Society and the ACF together penned a letter to the Japanese customers of Ta Ann, saying that things were OK in the Tasmanian forests while the IGA talks continued.

Peg Putt and Helen Weber both went apopleptic, saying it was a betrayal of their continuing campaigns to "save Tasmania's forests". "These people do not represent us", they emphasised. Which again puts the lie to any argument that there will be any peace at the end of the IGA process, no matter what the deal.

It also underscores the more fundamental point that in the eyes of the Wilderness Society and the ACF that current sustainable forest management practices are OK. Otherwise how could they write such a letter? Hypocrisy rising once again to the surface. It proves the point, that the argument has not really been about forest practices at all, just a land grab and an opportunity to protest. What's the argument been all about? An overblown sense of moral indignation?

Where in all of this does it leave the IGA process? And what chance of it surviving? The answer is obvious. It is doomed.

### **AGRICULTURE**

The Greens leader, Christine Milne, implied yesterday that she would welcome foreign investment in Australia, so long as it is not in water and land. She was responding to suggestions that Chinese interests were about to buy in to the Van Diemens Land Company, which holds large tracts of land in NW Tasmania, and is looking to expand its dairy interests.

This ridiculous xenophobic drivvle needs to be challenged.

For starters, the company is already foreign owned, and no criticism has been leveled at its ownership in the past. Many of the State's food processors are foreign owned, or at least have foreign interests - no criticism there.

In fact most of the mining companies have an element of foreign ownership, including all public companies, such as BHP and Rio - no criticism there. Nor foreign-owned forest processing companies, such as Norske Skog. Again no criticism.

Foreign investment should be welcomed, not condemned. The Premier has just returned from a trade mission to China to encourage just such investment, only to have the Greens nipping at the heels once again.

She should have a word to McKim. Let's hope Minister McKim, Greens leader in this state, will have a quiet word to his federal counterpart and invite her to pull her head in. Or is that too much to ask?

She should have a word to McKim. Let's hope Minister McKim, Greens leader in this state, will have a quiet word to his federal counterpart and invite her to pull her head in. Or is that too much to ask?

### **PLANNING**

The recent debacle on the Hobart waterfront highlights the absurdity of our present planning processes, and leaves one to wonder why anyone would want to invest here.

The Brooke Street pier proposal was first approved by TasPorts, prior to a development application even being lodged, only to have them threaten to pull the pin now that all approvals are in place. How weird is that?

The proposal obtained some funds from the Commonwealth, so the proponents now have to prepare a new business case for perusal and approval by the Macquarie Point Development Authority, the responsible agency. TasPorts is threatening to interfere in the review of this business case by making further demands on the proponents, causing more delay. TasPorts should be very careful that it is not seen to be taking sides in competing business interests on the waterfront.

And finally to my favourite stuff-up, the Parliament Square proposal. This has now descended into high farce, with a finding in the Supreme Court that the Appeals Tribunal might have erred in not considering some "prudent and feasible" alternative to the development, or rather to an aspect of the development concerning the old Printing Office in Salamanca Place. This finding took over 6 months to deliver – an appalling delay - and would imply that applying this test would require any proponent to consider doing nothing, as being an alternative to doing something. Nothing could ever be done, ever.

In both cases, more delays, more cost, and less work available for those seeking employment in these difficult times. If government can move with lightning speed in appointing a new chairman of FT, then it leaves one wondering as to the reasons for the glacial pace of reform when it comes to the absurdity that is our planning environment.

This newsletter is supported by Tasman Management Services.



Disclaimer: All details in this Newsletter are the opinion of Julian Amos. Should you wish to stop receiving this email please forward an email to the above address and place unsubscribe in the subject line.

ATTACHMENT

**The Tarkine**  
(emergency listing 2009)

