

Rob Horner

Submission: Tiwi Islands

Senate Committee inquiry



9/3/09

Dear Sir/Madam

Around mid 2005 Pentarch Forests invited me to Melville Island for the purpose of looking at the viability of sawmilling the D grade hardwood logs that weren't able to be exported because of their hollow centres with mud through them. At the time there was an estimated 25,000.00 tonne of log stockpiled at the wharf.

Through consultation with CSIRO wood scientist Gary Wauwh<sup>①</sup> and timber drying expert Greg Weir<sup>②</sup> it was decided that there was a viable resource there with a strong market potential in flooring and decking and trials on all three species supported this.

My business plan put too Pentarch was to build a permanent sawmill at the wharf. I would take two experienced men there and Timber Training Creswick<sup>③</sup> were to train 6-9 locals who would over time take over the operation. We would take there a 100 Kva generator a Kava F2000 Sawmill with board edging saw and docking line and a front end loader for timber and log handling. Flooring and decking would be the target product that would be either shipped to Darwin for drying and processing or dried on the island and shipped afterwards.

Soon after my proposal Great Southern Plantation bought out Pentarch Forests and the D grade saw log recovery proposal was shelved.

②

This decision was regrettable because

1) The community was robbed of the opportunity to establish their own sustainable small viable business

2) A valuable resource is being wasted by now being pushed up and burnt.

There are existing examples of this business model being successful using the same resource as on Melville Island. Nanum Tawap at Wrepa Resource Australia have a strong market for the product and more recently Galacruay Tunupinga

Yours Sincerely

Rob Horne