

To the Secretary  
The Rural Regional Affairs & Transport Committee  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT. 2000



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The Australian Forestry Enquiry

Dear Sir,

In response concerning the Forestry Enquiry I wish to bring to your attention a number of points.

In school many years ago I learned that :-

1. Trees hold the soil together
2. Trees provide oxygen for all living things
3. Trees turn carbon dioxide into oxygen
4. Trees keep water moisture in the ground in their root systems
5. Trees prevent water run off and therefore flooding
6. Trees cause rain to fall.

In Tasmania the State Government and the Forestry Department support the actions of Gunns Limited who are clear-felling native forests and old growth forests. The forest giants, some of the tallest stands of eucalypts in the world which are situated in the Steep River old growth reserve are also to be axed.

Gunns are also logging private timber reserves and where I live in the Middleton, Garden Island creek area of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel they have been logging. Some of the residents strongly objected to the methods used by Gunns and endeavoured put forward their reasonable complaints, to deaf ears.

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The objections were as follows:-

1. The land devastation caused by clearfelling methods.
2. The threat of aerial spraying with insecticides, herbicides "atrazine" etc polluting our domestic water supply i.e. water tanks and the dams for our stock to drink.
3. The laying of 1080 poison baits to kill the wildlife
4. The discovery of illegal logging being carried outside the private timber reserve without prior council authorisation
5. The refusal of Gunns Limited to pay any attention to the residents' objections in these matters
6. Their intention to plant monocultures e.g. eucalyptus nitens and/or pine trees. Both varieties are known to be water greedy, insect prone and a fire hazard.
7. Livelihoods in this rural community are threatened,
  - a. the organic producers and farms
  - b. the beekeepers
  - c. the fish farmers (run off and water pollution)
  - d. the oyster farms " " " " "
8. The threat to our wild life, endangered species etc
9. The threat to our way of life
10. The threat that Gunns continue to log the 500 private timber reserves in this area
11. These irresponsible practices used endangering our environment and the loss of Tasmania's "Clean, Green" image.

Today many Australians are facing environmental problems caused by the past generations of European land management.

1. Clearing away all of the native trees and bushes for agriculture
2. Thereby causing soil erosion by wind and water
3. The rising of salt levels and the devastation of the land

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4. Water table levels to drop and disappear
5. The depletion of water sources, creeks and rivulets
6. The proliferation of floods and deluges.

In Tasmania in the "midlands" area where early settlement occurred early in the nineteenth century the land was denuded of all native trees. That whole area has been experiencing drought for a number of years, and big problems for the farming community.

Tasmania possesses a great variety of exotic and fine timbers which are being ruthlessly destroyed because selective logging is not allowed to be practised. And yesterday a huge reserve of Huon Pine logs were lost in a bushfire. As you know Huon Pine takes several thousand years to grow, one of the oldest living species on Earth and only a few stands are to be found living, and on the brink of becoming extinct like the Thylacine. Two days ago Mt Stromlo burnt down, because it was too near to the fire hazard of a monoculture, a pine plantation.

It has been documented since 1986 that almost 60 species of frogs have become extinct. "Scientists are investigating whether abnormal sexual development from atrazine exposure is causing a worldwide decline in frogs" (The Sunday Tasmanian Sept. 8, 2002). Frogs are amphibians, and therefore in a water environment they are sensitive to chemicals, herbicides, and insecticides. The platypus is also an amphibian and endangered species. French and neighbours of mine have had platypus in their creeks and dams, but their properties adjoin the Gunns coupes so this unique marsupial is doomed. It seems our native flora & fauna is in great jeopardy.

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It is apparent that the world is experiencing serious water problems, with droughts in some parts and devastating floods in others. As water is disappearing in many places on earth it is at last becoming a commodity of great value for communities and nations. Water sustains all life, is more valuable than gold and is finally to have a financial value because of its scarcity. In economics we have never "realised" the value of the natural world, wild life, the environment and with no monetary value being placed on the ecological world it can be despoiled by greedy individuals like Gunns Limited. And so this beautiful island state, this jewel in the crown of the Commonwealth of Australia is being vandalised, raped and pillaged by a pack of pecuniary predators!

Yours sincerely  
Airlie Alam

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