

Media Release

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Timber Communities Australia

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WILDERNESS COURT ACTION TO WASTE TAXPAYER MONEY IN BID TO DELAY PROPER PULP MILL ASSESSMENT

The long suffering taxpayer is to cop a double whammy from the Wilderness Society with their latest time wasting campaign against the Bell Bay pulp mill.

The Australian taxpayer is already required to heavily subsidize the Wilderness Society's tax free \$11 million annual revenue base and now required to fund the Commonwealth's defence of this frivolous time wasting High Court action.

"The Wilderness Society's \$11 million fund raising effort is meant to promote wilderness not fund legal action against a value adding and employment creating development that will have zero impact on Wilderness." Mr Barry Chipman, Tasmanian State Manager of Timber Communities Australia said today.

The reason the Commonwealth does not need to assess wilderness is that 97.5% of Tasmania's high quality wilderness is already locked up in National Parks and Reserves.

There is no need to assess high conservation old growth forest as not one log of old growth forest is to be used in the pulp mill. As well the Regional Forest Agreement and the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement processes reserves over 2.7 million hectares of Tasmania including over a million hectares of high conservation value old growth forest.

"The EPBC Act set down a number of ways to assess any project, and the Commonwealth has correctly chosen the best assessment process."

"TCA supports the EPBC process as it will be an assessment process that builds on the two years of public consultation and public submissions conducted by the Tasmania RPDC process."

Unlike the RPDC process that should have taken 18 months but failed to achieve that time table, the Commonwealth and the pulp mill developer have strict time limits to observe.

The Commonwealth assessment process duplicates the RPDC objectives of looking at Commonwealth marine areas, migratory and endangered species.

"It is clear to TCA that this court action by the cashed up Wilderness Society is nothing more than an attempt to frustrate the established timetables and delay the proper assessment of the proposed Bell Bay mill as much as possible. Mr Chipman concluded.

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