

## **RESOUNDING 80 PERCENT PLUS VOTE for PULP MILL**

The Federal election result, both nationally and in Tasmania, has confirmed 80 percent voter support for the major parties, which both support the building of the Bell Bay pulp mill. This environmentally friendly and value-adding mill is to be built alongside two woodchip mills already in operation on land that has been zoned as “heavy industrial” land, which is also a part of Tasmania’s largest industrial estate.

Both Labor and Liberal went to the election with clear policies supporting the pulp mill’s development, as opposed to a “stop the mill” campaign by Green candidates. The anti-pulp mill campaign also extended to several urban NSW electorates, including Wentworth and Kingsford Smith. The Greens campaign attracted the support of millionaire Telstra board member Geoffrey Cousins and his small band of well-heeled travellers.

The long-running anti-pulp mill campaign being peddled by the Greens had a goal to muddy and disrupt the assessment process long enough for it to become an election issue. While they succeeded in their delaying campaign, even resorting to legal action as a delaying tactic, history now shows that their campaign failed at the ballot box.

As opposed to claims made by the anti-pulp mill forces, the Bell Bay pulp mill project is possibly the most scrutinised development to be proposed not just in Tasmania but also nationally. Timber-dependent families throughout Tasmania view this massive 80 percent voter support for the major parties as a resounding tick for the project, and a slap in the face for the anti-pulp mill campaign and a rejection of the Green’s anti-development policies.

As odd as it seems, Timber Communities Australia is very pleased that the major parties support for the Bell Bay pulp mill was actively promoted by Australian Greens in their election advertising by telling electors that a vote for either of the major parties was a vote to support the pulp mill. To quote Australian Greens leader Dr Bob Brown in his advertising: “Vote Labor or Liberal and you vote for the pulp mill”.

And that is just what the vast majority of the nation’s voters did. They voted for the major parties, with 85.44 percent voting for the Labor Party and the Liberal National Coalition, while the Greens attracted just 7.59 percent of first preference votes for the House of Representatives. In the Senate, the major parties combined attracted 80 per cent and the Green first preference vote a lowly 9.02 percent.

In Wentworth and Kingsford Smith, two NSW urban seats where the sitting members were targeted for defeat by anti-pulp mill forces, Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull increased his personal vote by 9.8 percent and sitting Labor Environment spokesman Peter Garret increased his personal vote by 4.6 percent votes.

Back home here in Tasmania, the combined Labor and Liberal candidates for House of Representatives seats attracted a combined 85.47 percent, while the Greens could only attract 13.7 percent first preference votes. In the Senate, Labor and Liberal combined polled 78 percent with the Greens polling 17.74 percent first preference votes.

Beyond belief, but perhaps true to form, Dr Brown is now trying to claim the election result is support for his anti-pulp mill campaign. But in reality, the election has confirmed 80 percent of voters supported candidates that supported the pulp mill. It is also evident in the vote that -- perhaps fortunately for Australia -- the Greens failed to gain their much sought after Senate balance of power. It will more than likely go to Family First and a South Australian independent. In fact, the Greens have lost a senator in NSW, adding to the failure of their anti-pulp mill campaign.

Tasmanian timber-dependent families believe it is time to move forward. The vast majority of Australian voters have endorsed the previous approvals by State and Commonwealth Governments, the nation's Chief Scientist, and the Federal Court for the pulp mill to proceed. The pulp mill will be greenhouse positive, resulting in a reduction of more than 1.1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere each year. It will also produce surplus green energy, which will be supplied into the national electricity grid.

This election result is very reassuring to Tasmanian timber families as is Australia's Chief Scientist Dr Jim Peacock's statement that, "operating within the stringent conditions, the pulp mill will be environmentally neutral".