



Florentine Protection Society

Patron: Steve Biddulph

7 March 2011

The Hon Lara Giddings, MHA
Premier
Parliament House,
Hobart. 7000

Dear Premier,

I write on behalf of the Florentine Protection Society, a community group with 154 financial members, to seek a meeting with you urgently to request immediate implementation of the 'Tasmanian Forests Statement of Principles to Lead to an Agreement'. The Florentine Protection Society, as a member of Environment Tasmania, is one of many community environmental organisations which have formally endorsed and support the Statement of Principles and the end to conflict over forestry issues in Tasmania.

On 14 October 2010 environmental groups and groups representing the forest industries agreed to a Statement of Principles to end decades of conflict over forestry, protect high conservation value forests and to restructure the forest industries to protect jobs. The parties to the 'Tasmanian Statement of Principles to lead to an Agreement' called on both the state and federal governments to support the Statement of Principles. By 15 December, both the Tasmanian and Australian governments had endorsed the Statement of Principles and committed their support.

One of the key principles, supported by environmental groups and groups representing the forest industries, is the immediate protection of High Conservation Value forests on public land by means of a moratorium on logging to be progressively implemented and fully in place within three months. On 15 December the then Premier, David Bartlett, and the federal Minister for Forests Tony Burke, issued a joint statement saying that the three-month timetable for putting the moratorium in place had started. In the past few days Minister Burke has re-iterated his commitment to the moratorium being fully in place by 15 March.

However, with only a week until the agreed deadline, we are dismayed that High Conservation Value Forests are still being logged and there is no apparent plan to have the moratorium in place by 15 March.

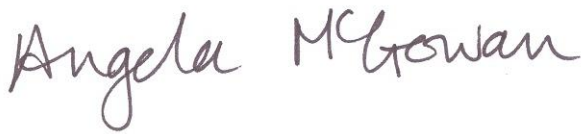
The Statement of Principles includes several other principles and a 12 month timetable for fleshing out the details of these principles into an Agreement. Clearly there never has been an expectation that all aspects of the final Agreement would be worked out prior to the moratorium on logging being implemented. In fact, the opposite is the case. It is clearly stated in the Statement of Principles that the moratorium should be in place within three months (ie by 15 March 2011). If the Tasmanian Government now decides to wait for all the details of the final Agreement to be in place before implementing the moratorium, this will completely undermine the process requested by both environmentalists and forest industry groups.

It is critical that the goodwill and ongoing negotiations between the parties to the Statement of Principles is not derailed by a failure on the part of the Government to honour its promise of 15 December to support the Principles and implement the moratorium.

Without the moratorium in place, there is a grave danger that the environmental negotiators and their supporters, such as the Florentine Protection Society, will lose all confidence in the willingness of the Government to support this historic agreement between environmentalists and the forest industries, and that the environmental groups will walk away from the process.

The purpose of meeting with you would be to ask you to immediately instruct Forestry Tasmania to stop all logging in High Conservation Value forests by 15 March, and to begin making arrangements for the reservation and long-term protection of these forests.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Angela McGowan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angela McGowan
Secretary, (Florentine Protection Society Inc.)