

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED 12pm Friday 9 December



Florentine Protection Society

Patron: Steve Biddulph

Message to Tasmanian Parliament on budget cuts and forestry

It's time to stop the failed drip-fed funding of Forestry Tasmania

Concerned Tasmanians alarmed at budget cuts to health, education and police today questioned the government's mixed priorities in continuing to pour funds and underwrite the Forestry Government Business Enterprise.

"Of course we want to stop the logging of beautiful native forests such as those in the Florentine. But we are equally alarmed at the severity of the budget cuts to essential services like health, education and policing" said Angie McGowan, a spokesperson for the group of environmentalists and health workers and Vice-President of the Florentine Protection Society.

"Everyone knows that Tasmania's economy is not in the best of health. And among the sickest in the economy is Forestry Tasmania.

"But we cannot keep slashing money from education and health and keep topping up the endless intravenous drip of public funds into the sick patient that is Forestry Tasmania, as this does nothing to cure the sickness.

"Today we say this to Tasmania's parliamentarians - we can no longer afford to drip feed the forestry industry. So, get this patient into surgery now to get it standing on its own two feet. Tear up the Forestry Act from the last century and replace it with a twenty-first century one that is sustainable, profitable and definitely not based on clearfelling native forests"

The group highlighted alternative models from other states, such as the smaller, plantation-based Forestry SA.

"South Australia provides a great example of what a healthy modern forest agency can achieve. This profitable industry sells plantation timber from an area of forest one eighth the size of that available to Forestry Tasmania. Last year, Forestry SA contributed \$45m to the state budget - enough funding for around 500 nurses, teachers and police. Now that's what a healthy patient looks like." said Ms McGowan.

What: VIDEO & PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Message to Tasmanian Parliament on budget cuts and forestry

When: 12pm today, Friday 9 December

Where: Parliament Lawns

For more information: Angie McGowan – 0428 248 082