



FACT SHEET

Gunns' Proposed Pulp Mill

The proposed pulp mill will increase the destruction of Tasmania's native forests

Gunns Ltd is planning to build a pulp mill that will use outdated technology and will increase the destruction of Tasmania's native forests.

Gunns wants to build the pulp mill at Longreach in the Tamar Valley. Longreach is further from Gunns' major plantation estate at Hampshire but is close to native forests of the north and north-east which should be protected in reserves rather than being felled for woodchips. The recent changes to the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) have neglected to protect most of the high conservation value forests in the north and north-east of Tasmania. These include the Great Western Tiers, the Blue Tier, North East Highlands, Reedy Marsh and proposed extensions to the Ben Lomond National Park. These areas will be under intense pressure to feed the massive appetite of the proposed pulp mill.

The pulp mill proposal specifies the need for 30-year access to Tasmania's native forests. Forest destruction and land clearing will escalate as new plantations are established. This means clearfelling of native forests, intense burning regimes, 1080 poison baiting and aerial spraying in domestic water catchments.

The forests of the north-east are already facing biodiversity threats that will worsen if logging escalates in the region. The wedge-tailed eagle and spotted-tail quoll are both at an increased risk of local extinction if planned forestry and land clearing operations proceed in the north-east.

The level of woodchipping in Tasmania is set to increase with this pulp mill. Gunns has revealed that total woodchipping will increase from 5.5 million tonnes per year to 7 million tonnes per year. Gunns is likely to export its plantation woodchips rather than use them in a Tasmanian pulp mill.

The proposed native forest-fed pulp mill will not be Totally Chlorine Free (TCF) as first promised, but Elemental Chlorine Free (ECF). Chlorine dioxide will be used in the bleaching process. The chlorine is required to remove the higher levels of lignin found in oldgrowth and mature trees. (Lignin holds the fibres in the wood together and provides the brown colouring seen in wood.) A 100% plantation-fed pulp mill could be totally chlorine-free.

Gaseous emissions from the pulp mill could adversely affect the health and livelihood of the surrounding communities.

The proposed pulp mill will consume up to a massive 26 billion litres of water each year. The current annual usage of water in the Launceston City, George Town, West Tamar and Meander Valley Council areas, including industrial customers, is 15 billion litres. The north-east water catchments, including the Tamar, are already under huge pressure from plantation establishment, and water restrictions are becoming more common. Accommodating a non-closed loop pulp mill with a huge appetite for water will dramatically increase the pressure on the north-east water catchments.

The level of woodchipping will rise with this pulp mill

The proposed pulp mill will use chlorine-based bleaching technology

The Wilderness Society is opposed to any pulp mill in Tasmania that uses native forests and chlorine bleaching.



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Biodiversity threats
will worsen in
north-east Tasmania

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Toxic pulp mill
effluent will be
pumped into
Bass Strait

Liquid effluent from the pulp mill, containing highly toxic persistent organic pollutants (POPs), will be discharged into Bass Strait. This will be in an area with limited water movement where it can take up to 160 days for flushing of water to occur.

Pulp mill effluent is detrimental to marine life and biodiversity and has the potential to impact fisheries. The proposed outlet is only a few kilometres from the biodiversity hot spot of Low Head.

There are currently three proposals for new plantation-based pulp mills in Victoria, worth \$1.7 billion. A fourth mill proposal has just been announced for Western Australia. These are broadly supported by the conservation movement, as they are plantation-based and totally chlorine-free.

The Wilderness Society is opposed to any pulp mill in Tasmania that uses native forests and chlorine bleaching.
