

## **EPBC Pulp Mill Assessment Process**

### **Next round of Public comments are due on Tuesday 5 June 2007**

The Federal Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull, has made a decision on how the Gunns Ltd pulp mill will be assessed under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The Minister is requiring assessment of the mill by "Preliminary Documentation" (see below for explanation) and is calling for public submissions on the mill's impact on migratory species, threatened species and communities and marine waters.

Comments are due on Tuesday 5 June 2007. For details of how to comment see information below.

### **Background**

On 2 April 2007, the pulp mill project was referred to the Commonwealth Government to determine the level of assessment. The comment period on the referral closed on the 18 April 2007.

The pulp mill project was determined to be a controlled action [exact date is yet to be determined] under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act); requiring assessment by Preliminary Documentation.

The controlling provisions under the EPBC Act are:

- listed threatened species and communities;
- listed migratory species; and
- Commonwealth marine areas.

The Commonwealth is now calling for public submissions on the mill's impact on migratory species, threatened species and communities and marine waters.

### **Where can I view the documents for comment?**

Gunns Website: [www.gunnspulpmill.com.au/epbc/](http://www.gunnspulpmill.com.au/epbc/)

By Post: Phone Gunns Ltd on 1800 265 297 request copies to be posted to you.

Pick up: Copies free of charge may also be obtained by collection from Gunns Ltd's Head Office at 78 Lindsay Street, Launceston.

Tasmanian Branch and Lending Libraries

Northern Councils: Launceston, George Town, Northern Midlands and West Tamar Council offices

Library, Department of the Environment and Water, John Gorton Building, Parkes, ACT 2600.

### **When does public comment close?**

Comments in respect of the Preliminary Documentation on the mill must be received by 5.00pm Tuesday 5th June 2007.

### **How do I lodge my submission?**

Officially, comments are to be sent to:

Gunns Limited Pulp Mill Project

PO Box 572

Launceston TAS 7250

Or emailed to: [pulpmill@gunns.com.au](mailto:pulpmill@gunns.com.au).

However, to protect your private information from being misused by Gunns, you can email your submission with your address and licence plate number to Malcolm Turnbull's office at

[Malcolm.Turnbull.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Malcolm.Turnbull.MP@aph.gov.au) and ask that your submission be forwarded to Gunns but with only your licence plate number for reference.

### **Preliminary Documentation – what is involved in this assessment process?**

The below has been drawn from:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/assessmentsapprovals/assessments/onprelimdoc.html>

Assessment on preliminary documentation is likely to be appropriate when:

- the number and complexity of relative impacts is low and locally confined
- the relevant impacts of the controlled action can be predicted with a high degree of confidence
- the relevant impacts have been or are being adequately assessed under Commonwealth or State legislation

### **Process**

Preliminary documentation requirements include public consultation requirements, namely:

1. the publication of a notice in relevant daily newspapers by the proponent
2. the distribution of copies of the preliminary documentation to members of the public who respond to the notice
3. the collation and consideration of public comments and the revision of the preliminary documentation in response to public comments and concerns
4. the submission of the revised preliminary documentation to the Department of the Environment and Water Resources, which then prepares an assessment report for the Australian Government Environment Minister

The Department's assessment report is a public document and is provided to the Minister as one component of the package of matters to be considered in making an approval decision. For further information on the matters to be considered by the Minister, see the page on approvals. Copies of the assessment report will be available to the public from the Department in most circumstances. (Exceptions can apply if a report, or parts of a report, are considered to be commercial in confidence or would be exempt under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.)

### **Timing**

Once the proponent has received the Commonwealth Environment Minister's direction that assessment will be based on preliminary documentation, they have 10 business days to publish a notice seeking public comment on the proposal.

The Minister will also specify the time period to be allowed for public comment.

Once the Department receives the revised preliminary documentation, its assessment report must be prepared within 20 business days.

The Minister has 30 business days (or longer if the Minister specifies in writing) to decide whether or not to approve the action.