

Response to Petitions

Petition no. 4, Petition no. E1, Petition no. 7 and Petition no. 9 of 2008

PETITION TITLE: Forest Industry's High Intensity Burning

- Fire is an essential tool in the management of forests. It is used in post-harvest regeneration of wet eucalypt forest; in the removal of forest residues and debris to reduce fire hazard; and in the protection of the public against wildfire.
- Fire is also a fundamental component of the ecology of Tasmanian eucalypt forests. Forest managers seek to manage fire to achieve best overall outcomes for the community. The use of fire cannot be considered unnecessary, and it cannot be avoided in our forests.
- Burning by the forest industry is not a large contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, nor to climate change in net terms. Forest harvest is balanced by forest growth, resulting, on average, in no net emissions. In particular, our State forests are managed in a sustained yield basis, meaning that both wood volume and carbon is being maintained over the long term.
- In the case of Forestry Tasmania, the present and projected future carbon balance sheet, and the inputs to that balance, can be seen in the report *Forestry Tasmania's Carbon Sequestration Position* (MBAC Consulting 2007). This report demonstrates the maintenance of carbon storage in the long term. The report is available to the public on the Forestry Tasmania website at www.forestrytas.com.au
- In regard to smoke and particulate emissions, the forest industry is a very minor contributor to the particulate load in the Tasmanian environment. The Tasmanian Air Quality Strategy (Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment, June 2006, page 28) shows that in 2003-04, the latest year for which figures are available, the estimated sources of health endangering particulate matter (PM10) across Tasmania were:

- Domestic solid fuel burning 41%
 - Industrial emissions 31%
 - Paved and unpaved roads 19%
 - Motor Vehicles 4%
 - Burning (fuel reduction, regeneration and wildfires) 3%
 - Other 2%
- The forest industry continues to utilise new tools to assist in minimising any nuisance that may arise from fire management activities, and pursues a philosophy of continuous improvement in its practices. Nonetheless, fire will continue to be an essential tool in the sustainable management of Tasmania's valuable forests, and in contributing to the net increase in carbon sequestered in those forests.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED
[Signature]
MINISTER 2/10/10