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MEDIA RELEASE

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More good money after bad if the Federal Government provides funds to build Gunns' pulp mill

Reports of possible Federal Government funding that would enable Tasmanian logging company Gunns Limited to keep alive its hopes of building the controversial Tamar Valley pulp mill were today condemned by community group Friends of the Tamar Valley.

Tasmania's Federal Independent MP for Denison, Andrew Wilkie has suggested federal funding may be made available from the Export, Finance and Insurance Corporation, a Government organisation that claims to practice: *'responsible lending in both financial and ethical contexts. We uphold best-practice environmental and social standards in the transactions we support and in managing our business.'*

"Since the pulp mill has repeatedly failed to meet either best-practice environmental or social standards it's difficult to understand how or why the Federal Government can possibly justify directing millions of taxpayer dollars towards a development that has never received social acceptance, and has consistently and repeatedly been widely condemned by the broad scientific community as being dangerously flawed, and environmentally harmful. The risks to human health especially are huge," said FTV spokesperson Ms Layton-Bennett.

"Lack of public support for the pulp mill is evident in the results of every poll and survey ever taken, while the risks associated with allocating taxpayer funding for the project were clearly set out several years ago by the Economic Unit of the Federal Government's own Environment Department."

"When schools, hospitals and public services generally are being forced to undergo massive budget cuts, or potential closures, how can any government possibly believe providing millions of dollars to a company that's involved, directly or indirectly, in a number of serious legal challenges, is public money well spent?"

"It's about time that all Federal and State politicians - regardless of their party affiliations - understood why the community will never accept the pulp mill being built in the Tamar Valley, and why Tasmanians will never stop fighting to stop it ever being built," Ms Layton-Bennett concluded.

References:

<http://www.efic.gov.au/about/Pages/aboutefic.aspx>

<http://tapvision.info/node/413><http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/notices/assessments/2007/3385/pubs/att-b9.pdf> (page 4)

