MEDIA RELEASE

26/07/2011

FRIENDS OF THE TAMAR VALLEY

Media Release – Gunns' Pulp Mill

Pulp Mill White-Out an East Tamar Highway Death Trap

East Tamar residents are well aware of just how foggy it can get in the Tamar Valley, especially on winter mornings when children are going to school, and people are driving to work.

The proposed Pulp Mill in the Tamar Valley could cause lethal white-out fog conditions on the East Tamar Highway, similar to those produced by the Bowater Paper Mill in Tennessee, which led to 12 people being killed, and dozens more being seriously injured in a multi-car pile-up on a neighbouring freeway.

Friends of the Tamar Valley spokesperson John Ball today called on Gunns Ltd, and those political parties which support the Pulp Mill, to produce evidence of a risk analysis that shows drivers on the East Tamar Highway won't be risking their lives on foggy mornings if this mill is ever built.

"A pulp mill would evaporate massive amounts of steam and water vapour from wood pulp which is emitted close to ground level, as is the case with the Bowater mill," said FTV spokesperson Dr John Ball. "Gunns' pulp mill is planned to be built less than a kilometre from the East Tamar Highway. The Bowater Mill was 4.8kms away from the freeway where the multi-car pile-up occurred, so a Tamar Valley pulp mill is potentially even more dangerous."

This issue was first raised in March 2007 by former member of the Resource Planning and Development Commission Assessment Panel, Dr Warwick Raverty.

"The fast-track approval process might have been a short-term fix for Gunns Ltd, but the long-term risks are going to be borne by whoever is foolhardy enough to invest in this project. The more tragic potential is that it might be Tasmanians and tourists who pay for this risky mill with their lives," said Dr Ball.

Links to YouTube sites showing full documentary covering the Bowater Paper Company incident:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HUoZ3reA34,
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okEBCON2YGc,
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ga_T5qd869Y