

## CANCELLATION NOTICE

The Western Rivers Preservation Trust **WAS** to hold a public forum meeting at the Deloraine Community Complex on Monday October 23rd 2006 at 7.30pm to discuss issues and impacts relating to forestry. The following invited speakers, our elected representatives in local and federal government and departmental officers have failed to confirm their attendance or reply in writing to the questions listed below prior to the lodgement deadline. We demand that they answer the questions submitted to them in writing.

**We live in a democracy, it is our right to request answers from our political and bureaucratic servants on matters that affect our health and well being.**

Below are the questions we asked our invited speakers to answer, either in person at the meeting or in written form:

**Mr Mark Shelton, the Mayor, Meander Valley Council**

1. Recently a large forestry company sprayed chemical herbicides into a major tributary of the Liffey River from which water is pumped for the town of Bracknell. What safeguards does Council take to ensure chemicals do not contaminate our water supply?
2. Is it Council's responsibility to ensure the water in the municipality's streams and rivers is not contaminated with poisonous chemicals or toxins?
3. What pollutants does Council test for in the municipality's water, at what places, and how often?
4. If council receives a complaint that forestry activities may be contaminating a waterway or stream what procedures do council set in motion?
5. Has Council conducted benchmark testing of waterways in the municipality, and if so at what places, when, and for what pollutants?
6. Is it Council's responsibility to supply the community with uncontaminated water?
7. Would Council support and finance a community health benchmarking survey in the Lobster and Mole Creek catchment basins and have it updated each year?
8. A large area of the Lobster and Mole Creek catchment basin (about 1700ha) is under Private Timber Reserve (PTR) status, does council have input or control over forestry operations on this land, our community water supply, and if not why not?
9. Under the forest act the only way the community can object against the declaration of a PTR is on the grounds that it is not in the public interest. Will Council object on behalf of the community, and have the community's objections presented to the Forest Practices Tribunal?
10. Why is it that on karst areas farmers are severely restricted so as to protect the delicate and unique karst system yet forestry can clear fell, burn, spray, erode etc without restriction or control from Council?
11. The Forest Practices Code and the Sinkhole Manual are claimed to be world's best practice. In order for Council's new planning scheme to be consistent with the above codes, and to protect rights of other land users, scenic values, natural assets, environmental values (eg. Sense of place) and for the health of the community will council incorporate the Forest Practices Code and the Sinkhole Manual as part of council's new Planning Scheme?
12. Under the present Planning Scheme forestry is "permitted" thus removing council's ability to receive or act on concerns from people or community adversely affected by forestry. Originally in the Planning Scheme forestry was "discretionary", which allowed conditions to be implemented to protect the rights of other landowners from the imposts, costs, losses and health risks forestry imposes. Will council do all it can to reinstate forestry as "discretionary" not "permitted" in its new Planning Scheme?
13. To what forestry organisations or lobby groups is the Mayor a member?

**Ian Houshold, Department of Primary Industry & Water, forbidden to speak by Dr J Whittington, General Manager Resource Management & Conservation**

1. Are drainage processes at risk due to broadacre disturbance on the Mole Creek karst system? Please explain the risks.
2. What changes are there likely to be to the water supplies?
3. If pollution of the water system does occur, will residents, dependent on the water from the karst system, be compensated with a new pure alternative for their drinking water?
4. To what extent can distribution of water borne chemicals be traced in karst water courses?
5. Is there an increased risk of accelerated collapse and subsidence with broadacre removal of vegetation? What are these risks?
6. What are the risks to the residents' water supplies if the Forest Practices Code provisions are not adhered to?
7. What are the specific risks on karst systems when poorly constructed road works is subject to intense log truck traffic?
8. What are the associated risks in a karst landscape when soils are eroded?
9. What types of disturbance may accelerate natural rates of subsidence and collapse in karst landscapes?
10. Do pollutants (chemical or animal carcasses) break down when passing underground through the karst system?
11. What measures should we take to preserve the world class Mole Creek karst system and our water supplies?

**The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, The Parliamentary Secretary for Water, Department of the Prime Minister, correspondence commenced 5 April 2006, will not reply!**

1. Is the Federal Government in a position to set standards for Atrazine, Semazine, Terbacil, 2,4 D and Dioxins in drinking water?
2. If this is not a Federal issue do the State Governments have to set standards? Are they the same for each State? If not please list standards for each individual State?
3. Does the Federal Government have its own water testing authority? If so can it be accessed by local communities, and if so at what cost?
4. What does Federal Government require of the State Government to test and monitor the quality of domestic drinking water, particularly in areas where plantation spraying has been done?
5. Does the drinking water in Tasmania meet the World Health Organisation standards?
6. Is it a fact that Atrazine is banned in the European Economic Community? If so at what level was it tolerated before it was banned?
7. What is the current level of tolerance for Atrazine use in Tasmania?
8. Why is Atrazine still permitted for use in Tasmania?
9. Can you as the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for water comment on the fact that as a result of the review of the Tasmanian Aerial Spraying Code of Practice, implemented by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industry and Water, that there is now no legislative requirement for forestry and agriculture to notify the Chemical Registrar of when and where they intend to spray?
10. Why is it that forestry no longer has to notify immediate neighbours and/or residents downstream that aerial spraying is to be carried out?
11. Can you direct us to any studies that identify the rate at which plantation trees take up ground water, especially in the first five years after planting?

**Senator Eric Abetz, Minister for Forestry, Fisheries and Conservation, is preparing a written response**

1. What area of Tasmania is presently occupied by MIS plantations?
2. The MIS investor is typically charged \$8-9000 per ha for just the trees. It costs between \$1200-1700 to plant them. Where does the balance go?
3. 2300 agricultural jobs have disappeared in the past 5 years as 87,000 ha of agricultural land went under plantations. Forestry also lost jobs over the same period. Where are the jobs being created and how many?
4. \$1.25 billion reportedly went into MIS schemes in the past year. How much money went in political donations to the Tasmanian Liberal Party?
5. Farms purchased for MIS plantations generally have their infrastructure razed to reduce valuation. The trees are exempt from valuation for rates purposes. How does this help support local government?
6. Councils are presently barred from prohibiting plantations. Councils' discretionary power to refuse approval to forestry was effectively removed in 1998. What is to stop plantations from displacing, say, 50% of our farms?
7. Gunns indicates it wants an additional 50,000 ha of plantation for its pulp mill. How many additional agricultural jobs will be lost as a result?
8. As we continue in the driest year on record, how much of our catchment yield is likely to be intercepted by plantations?
9. The revenue from a hectare of plantation on harvest will probably average less than \$1000 gross per ha per annum. Can you name a crop that is less productive?
10. Given that, wherever possible, MIS managers seek to purchase land with standing timber to add another revenue stream, and that Tasmania is the only state that has no legislation to control the clearing of forest on private land, in what way(s) do these enhance biodiversity, water catchments, and an interstate and international tourist industry worth \$788 million per annum?

**Mr Graeme Wilkinson, Chief Forest Practices Officer, Forest Practices Authority, Tasmania**

1. Does the Forest Practices Authority (FPA) allow the burning of green timber?
2. Why are plantations being established on highly erodible soils of the Mole Creek Karst system?
3. Why are streamside reserves not increased in areas of high rainfall and subject to high intensity rainfall events?
4. Does the FPA allow planting of trees on land that is highly susceptible to landslips?
5. How do you obtain a Forest Practice Plan if the logging company refuses to supply it?
6. What chemicals are registered for use in the forest industry?
7. Has the drainage patterns and characteristics of the Mole Creek Karst system been fully ascertained?
8. Can you provide a report of these drainage patterns and characteristics?
9. Has any baseline data been established for the drainage patterns and characteristics in the Mole Creek Karst system?
10. Have water tracing experiments occurred on plantations on the Mole Creek Karst system?
11. Are forest plantations compatible with sustainable management of the Mole Creek Karst system?
12. Have plantations on the Mole Creek Karst system been approved by the Chief Forest Practice Officer?

**The Western Rivers Preservation Trust will publish replies when they are received.**

**This seems to be the only way to create constructive debate in this community.**

**If you wish to contribute to the debate please send this sheet to the relevant politician or bureaucrat or contact:**

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