



# MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP**

*Minister for the Environment and Water Resources*

---

T226/07

12 October 2007

## **TURNBULL APPOINTS EXPERTS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH PULP MILL CONDITIONS**

The Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull has today appointed a team of scientific experts to ensure full and proper implementation of the tough environmental safeguards imposed on Tasmania's pulp mill.

Mr Turnbull announced 48 of the world's toughest conditions for the pulp mill last week, with monitoring and compliance to be assisted through the establishment of an Independent Expert Group and an Independent Site Supervisor.

"The conditions imposed on the pulp mill will ensure it meets the most stringent requirements of any pulp mill anywhere in the world," Mr Turnbull said.

"In making my decision, I accepted the independent, scientific advice of the Chief Scientist of Australia and his panel of scientific experts, including the appointment of an independent scientific and environmental monitoring team."

The Independent Expert Group will work with Gunns to ensure that the conditions are addressed through an Environmental Impact Management Plan, as recommended by the Chief Scientist of Australia, Dr Jim Peacock. This Plan will require approval by the Minister before the mill is commissioned.

"Today I am further implementing the Chief Scientist's advice by making the first appointments to the Independent Expert Group to assist with the design, implementation, monitoring and approval of the pulp mill," Mr Turnbull said.

On the advice of Dr Peacock, the Minister has appointed Professor Frank Larkins, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Chemistry at the University of Melbourne as Chair of the Independent Expert Group.

Professor Larkins will be assisted on the Group by three experts who assisted the Chief Scientist in preparing his advice on the pulp mill: Dr Graeme Batley, Co-Director, Centre for Environmental Contaminants Research, CSIRO, and Chief Research Scientist in the CSIRO environmental biogeochemistry theme, Professor Helene Marsh, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at James Cook University and Dr Mike Herzfeld, Coastal Environmental Modeller, Marine and Atmospheric Research, CSIRO.

Professor Paul Haddad, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Tasmania has also been appointed onto the Group.

"In due course I will be making further appointments to the Independent Expert Group to ensure all areas of required expertise are represented, including an international expert in pulp mill technology. As with the appointment of those members I have announced today, Dr Peacock will assist me in the selection of future members," Mr Turnbull said.

A number of the conditions imposed on the pulp mill will require work to be completed before any construction on the mill commences, including risk management plans for specific threatened plants, baseline studies for certain threatened species, monitoring of contaminants and underwater acoustic studies. Further conditions require additional work before the mill is commissioned, including additional hydrodynamic modelling, monitoring and toxicity testing of effluent, ecological surveys and species management plans.

An Independent Site Supervisor will monitor Gunns' compliance with these conditions over the life of the project.

Mr Turnbull today appointed an interim Site Supervisor for 90 days pending a permanent appointment early next year.

Adjunct Professor Robert Joy, School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning at RMIT University has been appointed the interim Site Supervisor. Mr Joy who is a former Deputy Chairman of the Victorian Environment Protection Authority will have the full range of powers under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* to access all necessary and relevant information to enable him to ensure full and proper compliance with the conditions.

“These appointments will ensure that, consistent with the stringent conditions I have imposed, the pulp mill is built and operated in a way that meets world's best practice in those areas protected under federal environment law,” Mr Turnbull said.

**Media Contact:** Brad Burke 02 6277 7640 or 0400 337 252