

HUON RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT GROUP INC.

Supporting resource-based industries in the Huon region, and the residents who depend upon them

Submission to the Tax Deductible Gift Recipient Reform Opportunities Discussion Paper

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The Huon Resource Development Group Inc. seeks to make a submission to this discussion paper and to focus on the generous tax deductible (DGR) status of environmental advocacy groups rather than real community groups like Mens' Shed and Neighbourhood Houses that provide a real benefit to the community, and which are denied DGR status .

Our group has a focus on supporting developments in the Huon Valley based on the sound management of our natural resources. This includes stewardship of the environment and productive conservation. So-called Environmental Non -Government Organisations (ENGO's) do not have a mortgage on 'care' for our Environment to the exclusion of others, including ourselves.

Our Mission Statement is to support progressive development in the Huon Valley through the democratic representation at all levels of Government ensuring a vibrant and sustainable community.

The Huon Valley has a proud tradition of sustainable management of our natural resources including agriculture, fishing and forestry.

The beginnings of our timber heritage is recorded as a backdrop to the Historical Novel *Hearts of Oak* by Bill Leitch, in which it was shown that industry development generally followed that of the timber industry around the State, and that is recorded in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Tasmanian Year book of 2000^[1].

The feature article on the Tasmanian native forest industry shows a history of innovation and product development based upon our native timbers from residential and construction timber, industrial applications such as apple boxes, boat building and fine furniture to pulp and paper.

Yet despite this record of innovation the region's timber industry has been beset by on-going and contrived conflict as a result of the rise of increasing political power of the environmental advocacy groups since the 1980's. This has manifested itself in a flurry of inquiries and 'agreements' starting with the Helsham inquiry and its overturning through the manipulation of a minority report in 1989 that resulted in a massive extension of the World Heritage Area, and later the Regional Forest Agreement in 1997, the Community Forest Agreement in 2005, (which was a consequence of the 2004 federal election campaign), and the latest Tasmanian Forest Agreement, (2013), to replace it.

The claims of the green advocacy groups such as Markets for Change, the Bob Brown Foundation, the former Huon Valley Environment Centre and Australian Conservation Foundation have devastated the Huon Valley's timber industry. So it is with alarm that we are seeing the wedge politics, the wild accusations and the political grandstanding that has so characterised the criticism of forestry being applied to the Tasmanian Fin fish aquaculture industry by Environment Tasmania. It appears history is now repeating itself with green groups threatening market action, devaluing the companies' share price, the boycotts, the protests and the sensational media stories as well as the use of political power while the whole time enjoying charity status.

These advocacy groups that provide only lobbying, protest action and propaganda in the guise of "education" should be removed from the DG Register. The minimum of actual on ground environmental activity involving rehabilitation and physically caring for the environment must be a prerequisite for these groups, and should be set at 75%, not the low 25% as in the discussion paper.

Yours sincerely,



George Harris
President
Huon Resource Development Group Inc.

21/07/2017

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000, 1301.6 - Tasmanian Year Book, 2000 available at <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1301.6Main+Features12000?OpenDocument>