



INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT PROCESS - GUNNS PULP MILL PROPOSAL

Legislative basis for assessment

On 22 November 2004, the Administrator (in the absence of the Governor) made an order declaring the pulp mill proposal by Gunns Limited to be a project of State significance.

The Premier, the Hon. Paul Lennon, has directed the Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC) to undertake an integrated assessment of the proposal in accordance with the requirements of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993*.

What is a project of State significance?

A project is eligible to be a project of State significance if it possesses at least two of the following attributes:

- significant capital investment;
- significant contribution to the State's economic development;
- significant consequential economic impacts;
- significant potential contribution to Australia's balance of payments;
- significant impact on the environment;
- complex technical processes and engineering designs; and/or
- significant infrastructure requirements.

Who will assess the project?

The RPDC is an independent statutory body with the responsibility for undertaking integrated assessments of projects of State significance.

Importantly, the RPDC's role is to assess the project and make recommendations to the government. It is the government that finally determines whether the project proceeds, and if so, on what terms and conditions.

How will the impact of the project be assessed?

The *State Policies and Projects Act 1993* sets out the statutory assessment process for a project of State significance. The proponent (Gunns) will prepare a Draft Integrated Impact Statement (IIS), which will describe the proposal and address all potential environmental, social, community and economic impacts of the construction and operation of the proposal.

A key step in the process has been the preparation of guidelines for the scope of studies and the process for preparing the Draft IIS. The RPDC invited public comment on a draft set of guidelines before providing Gunns with the final scope guidelines.

Gunns has submitted its Draft IIS to the RPDC for assessment. The Draft IIS will be placed on public exhibition from 14 July to 25 September 2006 and public comment invited. A hearing will be held. Persons who lodge a written submission on the Draft IIS may, at the invitation of the Commission, make a presentation at the hearing. The RPDC will prepare a Draft Integrated Assessment Report (DIAR), which will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days. Submissions will be invited on the RPDC's DIAR. Submissions will be considered by the RPDC and a further hearing may be held to assist the RPDC to consider the submissions. The RPDC will submit a final report to the Tasmanian Premier.

How will government decisions be made about the project?

The government will consider the RPDC's report and determine whether the project is to proceed, and if so, on what conditions.

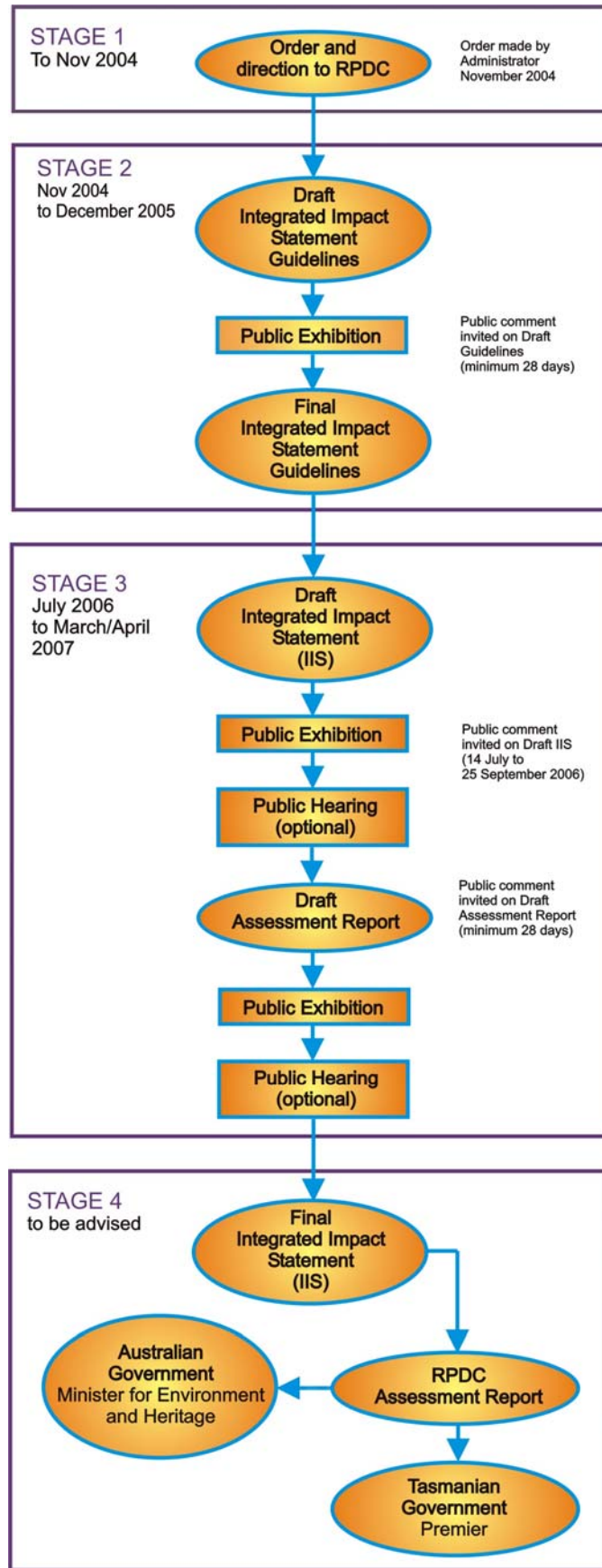
How can the community participate in the process?

Opportunities for public input are through submissions in response to:

- Draft Scoping Guidelines for the IIS;
- Draft IIS;
- Draft Integrated Assessment Report; and
- Presentations at a RPDC hearing.

Public comment on the draft Integrated Impact Statement will be invited through public notices in Tasmanian and national newspapers. Interested persons and organisations will have 73 days to comment in writing on the Draft IIS during the public exhibition period. Similarly, notices will be placed in newspapers to notify the public when the RPDC's Draft Integrated Assessment Report has been placed on public exhibition.

Figure 1 Assessment Process



For further information on the assessment process, contact Resource Planning and Development Commission by phone (03) 6233 2795; email: enquiry@rpdc.tas.gov.au, or visit the Commission's website: www.rpdc.tas.gov.au.