

Monday, 11 September 2006

Executive Commissioner
Resource Planning and Development Commission
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Bell Bay Pulp Mill will Retain Tasmania's Youth

We see the pulp mill for Bell Bay as an opportunity to keep our children here in the State. It is an opportunity to provide them with jobs that make use of their qualifications and aspirations.

The mill will need engineers, chemists, occupational, health and safety professionals as well as human resource managers, frontline management, and other tertiary qualified professionals. University graduates will include environmental scientists, forest and natural resource managers and a raft of technical qualifications.

Graduates of Vocational Education will also be in demand; mechanics, fitters, machinists, drivers, stevedores and construction tradespersons. Electricians and air-conditioning specialists will be needed for maintenance as well as supervisors and technical trainers. Every truck driver will need to be accredited with appropriate skills and experience.

Section 6.5.5 Employment and Skills section of the Integrated Impact Statement describes the impact on employment levels as a result of the mill. During the operational phase of the Mill the IIS shows that around 292 Tasmanians will be employed at the pulp mill site, being 72 salaried professionals, 77 hourly paid production staff, with another 63 people in maintenance and 43 in the warehouse and at the port facility. The chemical plant will employ 32. The IIS states that 85% of this workforce will already be living in Tasmania when hired.

Moreover there will also be a major increase in offsite and indirect employment. The model used in the IIS expects that total employment in Tasmania will increase by 1617 jobs in the operational phase. These jobs will be spread throughout the state and in a broad range of sectors.

The creation of these jobs will mean that families can be reunited with skilled and qualified workers returning to the state. By increasing the demand for employment reflected in an 2% increase in hours worked will provide incentive for our young children to remain in Tasmania once qualified. This will have major social impact to many Tasmanian families. It will mean grandparents will be able to visit grand children without an expensive interstate trip, it will mean more frequent family activities and less costs for weddings and funerals.

It will also allow the extended family to care for the aged and the very young and for values to be passed from one generation to the next. The tyranny of distance is a major impediment to many Tasmanian families that face the heartache of the next generation moving interstate to find suitable work.

Our family has experienced this dislocation with the majority of our children leaving the state in search of suitable work. It is only in recent years of stable political direction created by a majority government that we have seen value adding investment such as Newwood and the investment in sustainable tourism such as Tahune that has enabled my business to expand and to create jobs for my children enabling family reunion.

The value adding pulp mill with its ability to create over 1600 jobs in operation and 3400 in construction will create a future for many Tasmanian families that will give the next generation the choice to work at home or on the world stage, and to return home if they desire. The mill that can meet all the environmental guidelines set by Government will also be a major boost to Tasmanian families, and our future generations.

Sincerely yours,

Pat & Harry Roberts