



Sustainability is For Ever: Changing an Ecosystem is Not Sustaining it.

Sustainability cannot be achieved without knowing what is to be sustained.

Despite the promise of the 10 year old Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) “*to maintain an extensive and permanent Native Forest Estate and to maintain the sustainability of the total Forest Estate*”(Clause 60), the 650 timber workers who use Tasmania’s unique rainforest species for their livelihood still do not know if their future needs for specialty timbers can be met because **there has been no audit of our native forest timber reserves, except their eucalypt content. How can these forests be managed sustainably when nobody knows what is there?**

Only those content to live off the “by-catch” of an unsustainable process of ecological transformation are spared the moral imperative to oppose the “clearfell burn and sow” (CBS) regime in Tasmania’s old mixed forests that dominates their current management.

Our attempts to persuade Forestry Tasmania to uphold the RFA have not had the result we wanted. Instead they have resulted in continued attempts to marginalize and misrepresent us, while dishonestly using our work as part of the spin that attempts to justify the unsustainable management of publicly owned Old Growth Forests.

If Sustainability is what we want it is vital that our remaining Old Growth Production Forests are harvested without significant change to the species mix and age structure, and cut only at a rate that can be maintained in perpetuity. Instead, almost all current harvesting in mature mixed native forest is CBS except where Aggregated Retention (AR), is used, which is clearfelling but leaving 20 to 30% uncut in the form of islands, largely because the objection to clear-felling is perceived as merely aesthetic rather than economically and ecologically rational. The remaining forest “islands” are in any case frequently scorched, burnt, wind thrown and fail to achieve their purpose of ecological preservation.

While the area of sustainable Old Growth Forest continues to be diminished in this way, successful trials of much lower impact harvesting methods have been carried out (e.g. WARRA 8G) and these methods should be accepted **immediately** as a minimum standard. Forestry Tasmania should increase efforts to further refine methods to achieve site-specific low impact harvesting. There are many examples all over the world that can be followed or adapted to Tasmanian conditions. Modern accounting methods that include ecological factors and the full range of consequences for future generations make it clear that we must abandon the path we are on, with over 90% of Old Growth forest product being chipped. We must cease using expensive pseudo- academic forums to deceive the public, and learn to use the word “sustainability” to say what it actually means.

Timber Workers For forests: Visit our Website, Read our research Support our cause.