

**Joint Statement from non-government organisations attending an international meeting on
Stopping Irresponsible Investment in Pulp and Paper Mills to the Parliament and people of
Tasmania**

Heemskerck, the Netherlands

27th January 2014

The Gunns pulp mill project in Tasmania, Australia was regarded by us as environmentally and socially unacceptable due to its failure to complete proper environmental assessment and approval, the abandonment of due process in its approval and the negation of community rights to object and appeal. We were satisfied that the best resolution of issues surrounding the project was for it to be scuttled, dying along with the company that initiated it.

We are dismayed to learn of the efforts being made in Tasmania to revive this project, and of the secrecy surrounding the bidders for Gunns' assets, including the Permit to build and operate the pulp mill.

This pulp mill project was never able to satisfy environmental assessment procedures, was withdrawn from the formal assessment process when the company was informed that they were not compliant with the environmental requirements, and instead a fast track approval via Parliament overrode due process. The right of citizens to be heard and for environmental and social problems to be exposed and rigorously examined was denied.

An undertaking eventually made by Gunns Ltd to utilise only plantation resource for this project was unilateral and is not a condition on the Permit. Hence the use of native forest as feedstock for the mill by a different proponent is again at issue.

Further, we regard it as unacceptable for Parliament to intervene to negate a legal judgment on the continued validity of the pulp mill Permit.

We are also concerned that the Parliament and people of Tasmania have no knowledge of which companies are to potentially benefit from the enactment of the proposed Doubts Removal Bill, and that the new law would allow the transfer of the permit to any company, no matter their environmental, social or financial reputation.

Potential investors should be aware that the Gunns pulp mill project was infamous internationally for its disregard for valid environmental and social concerns and for the disregard for due process that occurred in its approval, a disregard of which yet another chapter is being written today in Tasmania. The view of this revived pulp mill project will be the same for any company that decides to invest in it.

This statement is issued by (how many?) NGOs attending from Asia, Europe, the US, South America and Australia.

