
[Australia: Joint Submission against tree plantation scheme in Tasmania](#)

Residents of the Waratah-Wynyard Municipality, a tree plantation-devastated community and environment in Tasmania, have issued a Joint Submission to the national authorities, the media, interested bodies and concerned people on January 13, 2002 (the full document is available at <http://www.wrm.org.au/countries/Australia/joint.html>)

The joint submission challenges the Federal Government's plan labelled Plantations 2020 Vision (<http://www.plantations2020.com.au>) which promotes tree plantations as 'good' for local communities, local economies and the environment. Instead, the group claims that there should be a public enquiry into the 2020 Vision, its process and subject matter because this distorted vision reflects only the interests of plantation corporations and not those of the forest, environment and the communities as it purports to.

Many local councils did not get proper notification of the submission process. Further local communities in plantation regions have not been given adequate time nor opportunity to have an input in the process. There has been also conflict of interests since citizens with significant investments in the tree plantation industry have been placed in key government jobs. This has resulted in corrupted regulatory overseeing of the Australian Forest Practices Code and other Codes of Practice while submissions and complaints by communities over the years that have been ignored by the State and Federal bodies and politicians.

As for the alleged economic advantages of the project, the community denounces that the national and federal authorities have ignored detailed studies which show the detrimental economic effects of tree plantations which have replaced viable family farms engaged in vegetable, dairy and grazing enterprises, bringing in a much lower income per hectare averaged out. In the process, millions of dollars of agricultural infrastructure have been permanently destroyed: family farm houses, dairies, fencing, tracks, irrigation piping, etc, all bulldozed into oblivion.

Employment outcomes for this tree plantation region are the lowest in the State while the alleged creation of jobs is just job-replacement for very largely irregular, underpaid, dangerous and part time posts. In terms of the economic perspective, the group views that the *Eucalyptus nitens* species, comprising most of this 'stick desert', is adding to a glut of supply in pulp, risking the community's future which will thus be exposed to the effects of a temperamental global market place.

Attractive areas of native forest and fertile farming valleys have been replaced by shadow-casting stick-like trees that have diminished the beauty of Tasmania's natural landscape thus affecting tourism.

In turn, the associated polluting processes of tree planting industries does not take account of the value and maintenance of the integrity of ecological processes such as pollination of crops by insects, filtration of water by plants etc.

Another peril faced by residents is related to fire outbreaks, which may increase as monoculture

plantations are as close as 60 feet from a dwelling, 10 metres from a boundary. People feel hemmed in from East, West, North and South with no clear exit in times of fire.

The overnight change in the pattern of land ownership --from the family farm to the multinational corporation-- provides a social framework for a new feudal order. The submission regards as only being a matter of time before corporations start leasing the land to impoverished local people denied a livelihood by the businesses these entities have replaced and monopolised. Over 60% of the municipality of Burnie is owned by one multinational corporation alone and similar figures must exist for the Waratah-Wynyard municipality.

The neighbours gathered in the joint submission want to reclaim their public land and acknowledge the true challenge for the future of finding a way to regain their local democracy. But above all, they demand an enquiry into the Plantation 2020 Vision and the corrupt governmental and industry bodies and their unregulated industry.

Article based on information from: "Joint Submission by Residents of the Waratah-Wynyard Municipality (a tree plantation-devastated area) on the Australian Federal Government's Plantations 2020 Vision", sent by Brenda Rosser