

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**SENATE QUESTION**

Question No 498

**Senator Milne** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, upon notice, on 16 June 2008:

- (1) At 24 November 2007, how many applications had been received in each category of Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (TCFA) grants, approved or in progress?
- (2) (a) Who were the members of the advisory committee? (b) Who represented the: (i) Tasmanian Government? and (ii) the Federal Government? (c) who was the independent member of the committee? and (d) who was the chair: (i) from inception until 24 November 2007? and (ii) since 24 November 2007?
- (3) Did the membership of the advisory committee change between 2005 and 24 November 2007; if so, what are the details of the membership changes?
- (4) Did the membership change after the 2007 Federal election; if so, who has been on the advisory committee since 24 November 2007?
- (5) Were the three independent positions on the committee advertised; if not, how were the members chosen?
- (6) Who selected the three independent members?
- (7) Who was appointed as the Independent Assessor?
- (8) What selection process was undertaken to choose the Independent Assessor?
- (9) Who chose and appointed the Independent Assessor?
- (10) (a) What criteria was used in choosing the Independent Assessor? (b) why was the department's 'Chief Executive Instruction on Procurement', including the department's 'Risk Assessment in Procurement Processes', not implemented? (c) who decided not to implement it? and (d) was the Minister informed of the decision not to implement it; if not, why not; if so, which Minister was informed and by whom?
- (11) What payments were made to the Independent Assessor: (a) until 24 November 2007? and (b) after 24 November 2007?

- (12) (a) What oversight did the Tasmanian Government or the Australian Government have over the recruitment or appointment of the Independent Assessor and sub-contractor? and (b) why did the department not formalise a consultancy agreement with the Independent Assessor and the sub-contractor?
- (13) Why did the Cabinet Implementation Unit (CIU) of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet decide to no longer include the three TCFA programs in the CIU quarterly reports past September 2005?
- (14) Why were the potential conflicts of members of the advisory committee, the Independent Assessor and sub-contractor not identified as a risk by the department as part of the program implementing planning process?
- (15) (a) Why did the department not require the advisory committee to adhere to the 'Better Practice Guide for Advisory Committees' by requesting members, prior to their joining the advisory committee, to sign a declaration of interests advising the committee of conflicts of interest? (b) who made the decision not to implement the guidelines? and (c) were either of the Ministers informed of this decision?
- (16) Why did the department, as the secretariat, not record the minutes of two of the three teleconferences held by the advisory committee?
- (17) (a) Did the Independent Assessor have business interests, or direct or indirect involvement in the Tasmanian forest industry? and (b) was this identified as a risk to the grants scheme; if not, why not?
- (18) Between 2005 and 24 November 2007 who were the members of the secretariat of the department: (a) responsible for chairing meetings of the advisory committee? (b) preparing and administering funding agreements? (c) the payment of grants; and (d) other administrative functions related to the programs?
- (19) Why did the department not report against all the outcome indicators in its 2006-07 report?
- (20) Why did the department not identify: (a) the number of jobs maintained? (b) the amount of new investment for the programs? and/or (c) assistance given within the agreed terms of reference?
- (21) (a) How many companies were assessed? (b) how many jobs were likely to be created? (c) how many jobs were maintained? (d) what was the amount of new investment for the program? and (e) was assistance given with agreed time frames?
- (22) (a) Which three applications for grants were refused but, following re-assessment by the Independent Assessor hearing of the applicant's appeals, were then approved for funding? and (b) what funding was granted?

- (23) Was either the Tasmanian Minister or the Federal Minister informed that the advisory committee had decided to not adhere to the eligibility criteria; and/or to not adopt a method or scale of rating applications; if so, when was the Minister informed; if not, who decided to not inform the Ministers?
- (24) (a) Why was the 'Chief Executive Instruction on Grant Management', requiring that a systematic assessment process be established in advance, ignored by the department? and (b) who signed off on this bypass of proper process?
- (25) (a) Until 24 November 2007, exactly what did the preliminary assessment conducted by the department secretariat assess? and (b) did the department's preliminary assessment commit funding in any cases; if so, which cases?
- (26) Will the Government produce implementation updates on the TCFA; if so, when?
- (27) Why did the performance reviews for September 2006, December 2006 and January 2007 provided to the department's executive by its Fisheries and Forestry Division not report progress against the outcome performance indicators in the project plan at Portfolio Budget Statements?
- (28) Will the department report on the number of jobs maintained, given that all proposals require applicants to provide employment details at the time of the application, and expected employment when the project is completed?
- (29) (a) Does the department validate the employment details provided by successful grant applicants; if not, why not? and (b) will the department institute this procedure via the recipients' payroll data?
- (30) (a) Why did the department agree to vary the guidelines for the TCFA grants from other forest-related industry proposal guidelines? (b) in particular, what is the reason detailed financial information on other sources of government funding was excluded? and (c) who requested the variation and what was the rationale provided?
- (31) Who has taken responsibility for advising the Minister or the Government when the department did not adhere to its 'Chief Executive Instruction on Grant Management' in relation to good eligibility criteria and method and scale of rating applications?
- (32) (a) Which nine grant applications had no departmental preliminary assessment (b) were any or all of these grant applications assessed by the Independent Assessor or sub-contractor; if so, which ones? (c) were any or all of these grant applications not assessed by any other body except the advisory committee? and (d) were any or all of these the subject of a declared conflict of interest at any level; if so, what?
- (33) Did the chair of the advisory committee document what she or he believed the 'intent' of the programs was since the criteria had been ignored; if not, why not?

- (34) Which grant application for \$49 950 had only a Department of Economic Development (DED) assessment?
- (35) (a) Which six grant applications under \$50 000 had no documented assessment covering financial viability on technical or operational viability? (b) were they approved? (c) what advice did the department provide to the Ministers as to whether or not they should be approved and on what basis? and (d) who takes responsibility for this advice?
- (36) (a) Why did the advisory committee decide not to continue with a probity advisor after only one meeting with a probity advisor present? (b) did the department inform either the Tasmanian Government or Federal Government that the advisory committee had dispensed with the services of a probity advisor; if not, why not?
- (37) (a) How many, and which, DED staff provided extensive support to applicants through the secretariat of the advisory committee? and (b) who invited, or agreed to, the DED having such a role when this role was not identified or formalised in the memorandum of understanding on exchange of letters between the state and Commonwealth governments?
- (38) Was any assessment conducted of any conflicts of interest of these DED officers, since they undertook assessment of some applications?
- (39) Which individuals or companies were recipients of: (a) Tasmanian Country Sawmills Association Programme (TCSAP) 2, worth \$102 585? and (b) Tasmanian Softwood Development Programme (TSIDP) 23(a), worth \$68 312?
- (40) Following the December 2005 advisory committee meeting, the DED was asked to assist with 16 business cases for the TCSAP, 15 business cases for the Tasmanian Forest Industry Development Programme (TFIDF) and 6 visits: (a) which grant applications was this assistance requested for? and (b) who conducted the site visits for the DED?
- (41) What criteria did the advisory committee use to decide which applications would be reviewed by the Independent Assessor?
- (42) What advice did the department or the Federal Government representative on the advisory committee provide to the committee about the need for criteria on thresholds to determine which applications would be subjected to review by the Independent Assessor?
- (43) Did the department or any section of the Tasmanian or Federal governments inform either Minister that the advisory committee had no criteria for referring applications to the Independent Assessor; if so: (i) who, and (ii) when; if not, why not?

- (44) (a) Which 10 applications over \$50 000 were approved without an independent assessment; (b) who were the applicants receiving \$68 312 and \$102 585 who were only assessed by the DED? and (c) which eight applications were sent to the assessors with the scope of assessment restricted by the advisory committee?
- (45) (a) Were the decisions of the advisory committee made by consensus or majority? and (b) were votes recorded; if so, can these records be provided?

**Senator Sherry** – The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

- (1) As at 24 November 2007, the following applications had been received, approved or in progress for each category of the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (TCFA) industry grants program:

Program	Applications received <sup>(1)</sup>	Applications Approved	Applications in Progress <sup>(2)</sup>
Tasmanian Forest Industry Development Program (TFIDP)	122	57	30
Tasmanian Softwood Industry Development Program (TSIDP)	25	13	13
Tasmanian Country Sawmills Assistance Program (TCSAP)	30	17	20

<sup>(1)</sup>Figures based on all applications submitted originally under each program prior to transfer to alternative programs. Some applications originally received under each program were determined to be more appropriate under an alternative program. Therefore the TFIDP received a number of applications which were considered under the other two programs.

<sup>(2)</sup>Figures exclude projects withdrawn, deemed ineligible or transferred to other programs by the advisory committee prior to 24 November 2007. For example, some programs were transferred from the TFIDP to the TCSAP based on their eligibility under either program.

- (2) (a) General Manager, Forest Industries Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Secretary, Department of Economic Development and Tourism; Mr Rob Woolley, Mr Craig Taylor and Mr Graeme Gooding.

(b)(i) Secretary of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

- (ii) General Manager, Forest Industries Branch, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- (c) Mr Rob Woolley, Mr Craig Taylor and Mr Graeme Gooding.
- (d)
  - (i) General Manager, Forest Industries Branch, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
  - (ii) General Manager, Forest Industries Branch, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- (3) No.
- (4) No.
- (5) No, the positions were not advertised. The independent members of the advisory committee were chosen jointly by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments based on the members' extensive experience within the Australian forest industries and their knowledge of harvesting, processing, value adding, business development and sustainability.
- (6) The independent members of the advisory committee were selected by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) in consultation with the Tasmanian Government.
- (7) Pöyry Forest Industry Pty Ltd was appointed as the primary independent assessor. Pricewaterhouse Coopers was engaged to undertake some assessments where Pöyry Forest Industry Pty Ltd declared a conflict of interest based on existing relationships with an applicant.
- (8) A public tender process was undertaken.
- (9) The tender selection process was undertaken by members of the Forest Industries Branch, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the independent assessor was appointed by the General Manager, Forest Industries Branch, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- (10)(a) The tender specified criteria for an assessor with the following qualifications:
  - (i) expertise in financial assessment of applications for funding;
  - (ii) a good knowledge of the native hardwood and softwood forestry industry;
  - (iii) experience in dealing with forest industry and related businesses;
  - (iv) staff with relevant expertise;
  - (v) a competitive cost; and

- (vi) ability to undertake assessments at short notice and complete them within ten working days of receipt of all relevant information, with the ability to complete 20 to 30 assessments between 1 January and 30 June 2006.
  - (b) The process by which the independent assessor was appointed was undertaken using the principles of the Chief Executive Instruction on Procurement. The department acknowledges that a formal risk assessment as outlined under the Chief Executive Instruction was not undertaken as part of this process. Potential risk was assessed as part of the selection process itself in assessing individual tender submissions. Any risk associated with the independent assessor's appointment was considered low based on the reputation and expertise of the selected assessor.
  - (c) The process for selecting the preferred independent assessor was approved by the General Manager, Forest Industries Branch, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
  - (d) The Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation was informed that the department had sought tenders from outside firms to provide independent financial assessment and advice on applications and of the selection of Pöyry Forest Industry Pty Ltd as Independent Assessor.
- (11)(a) Pöyry Forest Industry Pty Ltd was paid \$423,174.70 (ex GST) to 24 November 2007. No payments were made to Pricewaterhouse Coopers.
- (b) Pöyry Forest Industry Pty Ltd was paid \$108,490.46 (ex GST) after 24 November 2007. Pricewaterhouse Coopers were paid \$23,057.67 (ex GST).
- (12)(a) Oversight of the appointment of the primary independent assessor, Pöyry Forest Industry Pty Ltd, and Pricewaterhouse Coopers as the supplementary independent assessor, was undertaken by the department. The Tasmanian Government had no oversight of the appointment of the independent assessor.
- (b) The department entered into a consultancy agreement in line with the arrangements outlined in question 12(a) with the Independent Assessor Pöyry Forest Industry Pty Ltd, in May 2007 and this was registered on the department's consultancy register. The department also entered into a consultancy agreement with Pricewaterhouse Coopers in October 2007 and this was also registered on the department's consultancy register.
- (13) The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet is unable to confirm which initiatives the Cabinet Implementation Unit is monitoring, or has ceased to monitor, as the Unit's reports are considered by Cabinet and to release this information would breach the conventions of Cabinet confidentiality. In addition, the Unit's recommendations on why a measure may require continued monitoring, or could be removed from the Unit's list of initiatives being monitored, are matters considered by Cabinet and to disclose these details would therefore go to disclosing the deliberations of Cabinet. These arrangements have been in place since the Unit was established in 2003.

- (14) Advisory committee members were required to sign a Code of Conduct which included their obligations relating to conflicts of interest. These were declared by members of the advisory committee as they arose on a meeting to meeting basis and recorded in meeting minutes. The department required the independent assessor to declare potential conflicts of interest when accepting requested applications for assessment. Where a conflict of interest arose, applications were referred to the supplementary independent assessor.
- (15)(a) The Better Practice Guide for Advisory Committees was intended to be met by the process outlined in Question 14.
- (b) In administering the process for managing conflicts of interest of the advisory committee, there was no decision made not to implement the Better Practice Guidelines for Advisory Committees.
- (c) Neither the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation or the Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources as advised of the arrangements for managing potential conflicts of interest.
- (16) The two teleconference meetings for which minutes were not recorded were short in duration and primarily for consultation between members on issues raised by stakeholders. No decisions relating to applications received or under consideration were discussed.
- (17)(a) Pöyry Forest Industry Pty Ltd is a large and well respected international forest consultancy company which undertakes consultancy projects within Australia, including Tasmania, and internationally. Where the independent assessor had a business interest with any applicant, the secretariat was advised. Where a direct business interest was identified, an alternative independent assessor in Pricewaterhouse Coopers was used to undertake the assessment.
- (b) The business interests of Poyry Forest Industry Pty Ltd as principal independent assessors were not identified as a major risk to the grants scheme. A contingency was put in place through the use of Pricewaterhouse Coopers where a conflict of interest arose.
- (18)(a) General Manager, Forest Industries Branch, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- (b) Staff within the Forest Industries Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- (c) Staff within the Forest Industries Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- (d) Staff within the Forest Industries Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

- (19) The department reported on the TCFA Industry Development Programs in the department's 2006-07 annual report against all identified indicators, namely the number of grants approved (businesses assisted); the number of people employed in the companies assisted (jobs maintained); the total level of investment anticipated upon completion; and the timely and effective delivery of programs.
- (20) (a) In its 2006-07 annual report, the department reported that 35 companies employing 1619 people were awarded grants that would support the creation of 163 jobs.
- (b) In its 2006-07 annual report, the department reported that upon completion, the approved grants would support investment of \$103.2 million in the Tasmanian forest industry.
- (c) The 2006-07 annual report indicated that \$33.8 million worth of grant assistance was approved by the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation and the Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources. \$7.3 million of payments were made under the industry grants program during the financial year. Payments were made subject to the accuracy and timeliness of information submitted by grantees.
- (21) (a) Up to the end of December 2007 the TCFA Industry Development Program had assessed 89 applications for recommendation to the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation and the Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources.
- (b) Based on information submitted by applicants during the application process, it was estimated that the 89 applications recommended to Ministers for funding across the three TCFA Industry Development Programs would create 311 jobs.
- (c) The department is implementing measures to report more fully on the job outcomes of the program when it is completed at the end of June 2009.
- (d) The department will not be able to fully report on the level of new investment for the program until projects have been fully completed.
- (e) In most cases, assistance was provided dependent on the provision of the necessary information by applicants to the advisory committee and to the department in the preparation of funding Deeds of Agreement.
- (22) (a) The following applications were initially considered by the advisory committee to be unsuitable for funding, based on the information submitted in their applications and the Independent Assessor's reports, but upon review of additional information supplied by applicants were subsequently recommended for funding:

KJ and B Mahnken,  
Riella Pty Ltd, and

G and W Harvesting Pty Ltd.

- (b) The grant provided to KJ and B Mahnken was for \$1,150,516.

The grant provided to Riella Pty Ltd was for \$161,000.

The grant provided to G and W Harvesting was for \$397,875.

- (23) All project applications were assessed against the relevant program eligibility criteria by the advisory committee, prior to making recommendations to Ministers. The specific guidelines and eligibility criteria for each program, which were approved by the relevant Australian and Tasmanian ministers, did not include provisions for ranking applications.
- (24)(a) The principles of the 'Chief Executive Instruction on Grant Management' were taken into account in developing program guidelines, which included a framework for thoroughly assessing applications. The TCFA industry development programs were negotiated and administered jointly between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments and as a result some aspects of the program guidelines were different to other Australian Government grant programs. This occurred in advance of any approvals being made by the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation and the Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources.
- (b) The assessment process was approved by the then Australian Government Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation and the then Tasmanian Government Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources.
- (25)(a) The department's role in undertaking preliminary assessments of applications was to assist the efficiency of the advisory committee's work. In particular, preliminary assessments conducted by the department based secretariat recorded the applicant's name and address; a brief summary of the project; grant amount sought; initial summary of the financial position of the company based on information supplied by the applicant; access to timber resources and how well the company's application met the program's eligibility criteria.
- (b) No.
- (26) The department will provide updated information relating to implementation of TFCA Industry Development Programs in its annual report. An annual report of progress of TCFA commitments, including those relating to the Industry Development Programs, is produced annually for the first 5 years of this supplementary Regional Forest Agreement (RFA), in accordance with reporting requirements for the Tasmanian RFA and the RFA Act (2002).
- (27) Progress of the TCFA Industry Development Program against the Portfolio Budget Statement was not reported to the department's Executive in the performance reviews for September 2006, December 2006 and January 2007 as it was not required.

- (28) The department is implementing measures to report on key program outcomes as outlined in Question 21.
- (29)(a) The department accepts information provided by applicants in good faith unless it has reason to question it. However as part of the measures to report key project outcomes, it will make inquiries regarding grant recipient levels of employment.
- (b) No, the department will not investigate payroll data.
- (30)(a) Guidelines developed for the TCFA Industry Development Programs were developed specifically for those programs, taking account of the specific objectives and requirements of the TCFA and its impacts upon the Tasmanian forest industry.
- (b) There were no exclusions applied regarding an applicant's provision of detailed financial information or other sources of government funding. In applying for funding, recipients were required to provide details of all funding and its source, and to verify these claims where required.
- (c) No recommendation to request a variation was made.
- (31) The General Manager, Forest Industries Branch, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry had responsibility for advising the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation on the approval of guidelines for the programs.
- (32)(a) The following applicants did not have a preliminary assessment undertaken by the department:
- MC Cartage Enterprises Pty Ltd,  
Casegrande Lumber Pty Ltd,  
Southcape Harvesters Pty Ltd,  
Wrights Harvesting Pty Ltd,  
Australian Paper Pty Ltd,  
Maclaine Enterprises,  
McKay Investments Pty Ltd,  
Mechanical Logging Pty Ltd, and  
Auspine Pty Ltd.
- (b) Yes, the following applicants were assessed by the independent assessor:
- Maclaine Enterprises,  
McKay Investments Pty Ltd,

Mechanical Logging Pty Ltd,  
Australian Paper Pty Ltd,  
Wrights Harvesting Pty Ltd,  
Southcape Harvesters Pty Ltd, and  
Casegrande Lumber Pty Ltd.

- (c) Grants awarded to Auspine Pty Ltd and MC Cartage Enterprises Pty Ltd did not have assessments undertaken by another body except the advisory committee.
- (d) Mr Woolley declared a potential conflict of interest through a family relationship with TFI 103 Wrights Harvesting Pty Ltd. He was not part of any decision made by the advisory committee on this application.

Mr McIlfrick from the Department of Economic Development and Tourism declared a potential conflict of interest as he chairs the Tasmanian Government's Natural Gas Steering Committee whose decisions could affect the grant application submitted by Australian Paper Pty Ltd to install natural gas boilers. He was not part of any decision made by the advisory committee on this application.

- (33) The intent of the program was outlined in objectives established for each of the three sub programs' guidelines approved by the then Australian Government Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation and the then Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources.
- (34) A grant provided to RA and LE Cunningham trading as Blue Tier Enterprises.
- (35)(a) The following six applications under \$50,000 were not considered by the Independent Assessor:
  - RM and MA Carter,
  - Goshen Sawmill,
  - Tasmanian Eucalypt and Native Seeds Pty Ltd,
  - Gunns Ltd,
  - Torenius Timber Pty Ltd, and
  - Statewide Forest Services Pty Ltd.

- (b) Yes.
- (c) The department did not provide specific advice to the relevant ministers that each of these six grant applications should be approved but provided support services through the secretariat. The secretariat prepared briefing papers for the

Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation on behalf of the advisory committee after assessments, deliberations and subsequent recommendations were made in accordance with the program guidelines.

- (d) The secretariat briefing papers were approved by the General Manager, Forest Industries Branch, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry acting in their capacity as Chair of the advisory committee.
- (36) (a) The probity advisor attended one meeting and had no comments on the advisory committee's deliberations. The advisory committee then considered that the probity advisor's presence was not required at future meetings.
- (b) No. The department did not inform either the Tasmanian Government or Federal Government of having dispensed with the services of a probity advisor as it was not considered necessary to do so.
- (37) (a) The Tasmanian Department of Economic Development and Tourism has provided assistance to applicants throughout the grant application process but does not assist with duties of the secretariat. Numerous regionally based and head office staff have assisted throughout the duration of the grant program by providing support to applicants in preparing submissions, including preparing business cases and the provision of advice and information related to the program, and in providing advice to the advisory committee.
- (b) The use of the Tasmanian Department of Economic Development and Tourism to provide assistance to applicants was outlined in the guidelines approved by the Australian Government Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation and the Tasmanian government Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources relating to the Tasmanian Forest Industry Development Program and Tasmanian Country Sawmills Assistance Program.
- (38) No.
- (39) (a) A grant worth \$102,585 was provided to Kelly Gang Timbers Pty Ltd.
- (b) A grant worth \$68,312 was provided to Statewide Forest Services Pty Ltd.
- (40) (a) The Department of Economic Development and Tourism assisted with the following applications and the preparation of business plans under the Tasmanian Country Sawmills Assistance Program after the December 2005 advisory committee meeting:
- Goshen Sawmill,
  - Kelly Gang Timbers Pty Ltd,
  - Southern Forest Farm Products,
  - Bakes Sawmill Pty Ltd,

Bishops Sawmill,  
Muskett's Sawmill Pty Ltd,  
GL & VN Barber Pty Ltd,  
Karanja Timbers Pty Ltd,  
Cumming Timber & Veneers,  
Torenius Timber Pty Ltd,  
Mirragong Pty Ltd,  
Smart Timber Solutions Pty Ltd,  
I & J Kelly Pty Ltd,  
Lenffer Natural Resource Pty Ltd,  
Gondwana Forest Products Pty Ltd, and  
Maclaine Enterprises.

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism assisted with the following applications and the preparation of business plans under the Tasmanian Forest Industries Development Program after the December 2005 advisory committee meeting:

Aprin Logging Pty Ltd,  
Phillips Sawmill and Timber Products,  
Tasmanian Timber Pty Ltd,  
North West Softwoods Pty Ltd,  
TP Bennett and Sons Pty Ltd,  
DM and SJ Iles Pty Ltd,  
Maclaine Enterprises,  
G and W Harvesting Pty Ltd,  
The Last Resource Pty Ltd,  
RJ and JE Bishop Pty Ltd,  
Kaym Pty Ltd,  
Select Logging Pty Ltd,

Buffalo Valley Logging Company Pty Ltd,

Koppers Wood Products Pty Ltd, and

Tasmanian Forest Contractors Association Ltd.

As part of the assistance provided to applicants by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, site visits to applicant's work sites were undertaken on an as needs be basis. Specific site inspections were requested for the following applicants:

G and W Harvesting Pty Ltd,

Kaym Pty Ltd,

Select Logging Pty Ltd,

Buffalo Valley Logging Pty Ltd,

Koppers wood Products Pty Ltd, and

Low Impact Logging Pty Ltd.

(b) A combination of regionally based and Head Office staff.

(41) Formal criteria for such referrals were not established. The committee referred applications to the assessor where they involved new technology or required more detailed analysis of an applicant's business and financial status than the advisory committee felt able to conduct.

(42) The departmental representative did not provide formal advice to the advisory committee on this issue but as an active member and chair of the committee participated in decisions relating to the referral of applications for independent assessment in line with the process outlined in question 41.

(43) No. In developing the guidelines for each program, which include reference to the use of an independent assessor, it was not considered necessary to specify the criteria for referring applications to the assessor for independent review.

(44)(a) The following applications for grants over \$50,000 were not reviewed by the Independent Assessor:

RJ & JE Bishop Pty Ltd,

University of Tasmania,

Koppers Wood Products Pty Ltd,

Gunns Ltd,

Gunns Ltd,

Forest and Forest Industry Council of Tasmania,

Kelly Gang Timbers Pty Ltd,

Torenius Timber Pty Ltd,

I. & J. Kelly Pty Ltd, and

Statewide Forest Services Pty Ltd.

(b) Statewide Forest Services Pty Ltd received \$68 312 and Kelly Gang Timbers Pty Ltd received \$102 585.

(c) McKay Investments Pty Ltd,

Integrated Tree Cropping Ltd,

Integrated Tree Cropping Ltd,

Integrated Tree Cropping Ltd,

Ta Ann Tasmania Pty Ltd,

Australian Paper Pty Ltd,

Paper Australia Pty Ltd, and

Paper Australia Pty Ltd.

(45)(a) Decisions made by the advisory committee were by consensus.

(b) Votes were not recorded by the advisory committee.