



PRIME MINISTER

NOTE FOR MEDIA

6 November 1986

The following can be attributed to a spokesman for the Prime Minister:

Attached are transcripts of two interviews the Prime Minister gave in Melbourne this morning, mainly on the subject of logging in Tasmania. Also attached is a copy of a letter the Prime Minister has sent today, Thursday, 6 November, to the Premier of Tasmania on the subject of the logging activities which commenced in the Jackey's Marsh area yesterday, Wednesday, 5 November. The letter follows the two communications which the Prime Minister sent the Premier yesterday.

As will be seen, today's message is in response to the Premier's statement that the logging activities are in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding which seeks to control exploitation of forest areas in Tasmania.

While the Memorandum of Understanding does canvass exploitation of Jackey's Marsh in accordance with environmental impact studies - the clause upon which the Premier appears to be relying - it also provides for a series of consultative measures in the case of areas listed as part of the National Estate, and in the event of disagreement between the two governments over the future of those areas.

In the Jackey's Marsh case, those consultative measures, outlined in Clauses 23, 24 and 27 of the Memorandum of Understanding, must be brought into play. In the event of a failure of those measures, Clause 30 then provides for matters which cannot be reconciled at officer level to be then reconciled at ministerial level.

The Government has asked for legal advice from the Attorney General on its powers and possible courses of action with regard to protecting the National Estate values of the Jackey's Marsh area.

TEXT OF LETTER SENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE PREMIER OF
TASMANIA TODAY, 6 NOVEMBER 1986.

Following my letter of 5 November 1986 on forestry operations at Warner's Sugar Loaf in the Jackey's Marsh - Quamby Bluff area, I have noted public comments by you that logging is proceeding in the area in accordance with the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding on Tasmanian Woodchip Exports.

I draw your attention once again to Clauses 23, 24 and 27 of the Memorandum of Understanding which outline the consultation process "for places listed on the register of the National Estate". You will be aware that on 21 October 1986 the Australian Heritage Commission publicly advised its decision to list Jackey's Marsh - Quamby Bluff on the register of the National Estate. National Estate values identified by the Australian Heritage Commission in the Jackey's Marsh - Quamby Bluff area include rare/threatened plant species, outstanding aesthetic value, archaeological sites and rainforest.

In authorising forestry operations in the Jackey's Marsh - Quamby Bluff area, the Tasmanian Government has not followed the process of consultation on the manner in which these National Estate values would be protected.

The Advisory Committee on Tasmanian Forestry Operations has been asked to report to the Commonwealth on the Lemonthyme State Forest and Jackey's Marsh - Quamby Bluff as a matter of urgency. The Committee has indicated that it will make every effort to provide that advice by the end of the month.

Meanwhile, the Department of Primary Industry has requested from the Australian Heritage Commission detailed information on the National Estate values of Jackey's Marsh - Quamby Bluff, to be forwarded to the Tasmanian Forestry Commission as part of the formal consultation process.

Clearly there is disagreement between the Commonwealth and Tasmanian Governments over this issue. Accordingly, I draw your attention to Clause 30 of the Memorandum of Understanding which states that:

"In the event that any dispute arises over matters concerning Forest Operations and other export-related matters which cannot be reconciled at officer level, the two relevant Ministers will meet and will discuss the problem with the intent of reaching a mutually acceptable solution. The MPI and the MFF agree that every endeavour will be made to implement and administer the matters the subject of this understanding through mutual co-operation rather than by resort to the coercive use of Commonwealth or State powers and prerogatives."

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I now call on you to agree to the activation of that clause so that the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry and the Tasmanian Minister of State Forests can discuss the matter as soon as possible. Meanwhile, I am sure you will agree that in the spirit of consultation and co-operation forestry operations in the Jackey's Marsh - Quamby Bluff area should cease immediately. I trust you will take the appropriate action.