

Export of Woodchips through the Port of Bunbury

**Southern Plantations Chip Co. Pty. Ltd.
Proposed change to environmental conditions**

**Report and recommendations
of the Environmental Protection Authority**

**Environmental Protection Authority
Perth, Western Australia
Bulletin 684
June 1993**

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report contains the Environmental Protection Authority's environmental assessment and recommendations to the Minister for the Environment on the environmental acceptability of the proposal.

Immediately following the release of the report there is a 14-day period when anyone may appeal to the Minister against the Environmental Protection Authority's report.

After the appeal period, and determination of any appeals, the Minister consults with the other relevant ministers and agencies and then issues his decision about whether the proposal may or may not proceed. The Minister also announces the legally binding environmental conditions which might apply to any approval.

APPEALS

If you disagree with any of the contents of the assessment report or recommendations you may appeal in writing to the Minister for the Environment outlining the environmental reasons for your concern and enclosing the appeal fee of \$10.

It is important that you clearly indicate the part of the report you disagree with and the reasons for your concern so that the grounds of your appeal can be properly considered by the Minister for the Environment.

ADDRESS

Hon Minister for the Environment
12th Floor, Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

CLOSING DATE

Your appeal (with the \$10 fee) must reach the Minister's office no later than 5.00 pm on **8 July 1993**.

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1. Background

Southern Plantations Chip Co. Pty. Ltd. (the proponent) received approval from the Minister for the Environment on the 17 September 1990 to export unprocessed woodchips through the Port of Bunbury subject to a number of legally binding environmental conditions (Appendix 1).

That approval was given after an extensive investigation of the environmental issues associated with the harvesting and export of woodchips from the southern forests of the State (EPA 1988b), preparation of a Consultative Environmental Review, receipt of public and government agency submissions and release of the Environmental Protection Authority's report and recommendations on the proposal (EPA Bulletin 436).

Southern Plantations was a joint venture company owned by Whittakers and the TPS Group (trading as McLeans Consolidated). It was formed to market McLeans previously approved 60,000 tonnes of woodchips, and Whittakers 50,000 tonnes through the Port of Albany.

In applying for approval of the joint venture, the company indicated proposed changes to the original McLean's component of the project. The changes were that the sawmill waste would now be derived from a variety of sawmills and not the Denmark sawmill exclusively and export would now be through the Port of Bunbury rather than the Port of Albany. Southern plantations is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Whittakers,

The Minister required that the variation of the original McLeans approval be assessed by the Environmental Protection Authority. No additional approvals were required for the original Whittakers component.

After assessment of the proposal the Environmental Protection Authority concluded that the proposed changes were environmentally acceptable and recommended approval.

Southern Plantation Chip Company had requested that the varied project be approved for an interim period of two years so as to permit the establishment of firm contracts for the export of woodchips and provide the cash flow to fund the reappraisal and if appropriate, implementation of the original Albany approval proposal. Accordingly, the Environmental Protection Authority recommended that approval for the varied proposal be limited to two years following which the proponent should revert to the proposal assessed and approved in 1988 or submit a new proposal to the Environmental Protection Authority for assessment.

Southern Plantations approval was given until 14 April 1993, the date on which the two year approval expired.

2. The proposal

A formal request was received from the proponent on 25 February 1993 to continue to export woodchips through the Port of Bunbury for a further two years. The extension in time was requested because of delays in completing the comprehensive proposal for Albany, and a detailed explanation of the causes of these delays was subsequently provided in correspondence dated 9 June 1993. An explanation of the progress towards satisfying the environmental conditions was also provided

3. Advice of the Environmental Protection Authority

The request for a further extension in time to finalise the Albany feasibility study does not represent a significant change to the original proposal, nor is it likely to have significant impacts on the environment.

The company has indicated the nature of the investigation undertaken during the past two years as part of the Albany feasibility study. It has also described the direction of the remaining work and provided a detailed report on logistic and administrative matters to the Minister for the Environment for consideration. On the basis of this information, the Environmental Protection Authority does not consider that a further extension in line with the request and intended investigations is unreasonable. Progress towards the completion of the Albany feasibility study should be described in the 1994 compliance reports to the Environmental Protection Authority.

Should the results of the feasibility study lead to significant alterations to the current proposal, the proponent should be required to prepare a "new" proposal document for consideration by the Authority.

4. Recommendations

The Environmental Protection Authority recommends that approval be given for a further extension of two years to Southern Plantations Chip Company Pty Ltd to finalise the Albany feasibility study.

The Environmental Protection Authority recommends that the existing Environmental Condition requiring the proponent to provide bi-annual (six monthly) reports be altered to require annual reporting. The Environmental Protection Authority does not believe that the existing frequency is now necessary.

The Environmental Protection Authority recommends that the format of the existing environmental conditions be altered to reflect current administrative practices, as outlined below.

**STATEMENT TO AMEND CONDITIONS APPLYING TO A PROPOSAL
(PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 46 OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1986)**

PROPOSAL: WOODCHIP EXPORT THROUGH THE PORT OF BUNBURY

CURRENT PROPONENT: SOUTHERN PLANTATIONS CHIP CO PTY LTD (343/799)

CONDITIONS SET ON: 17 SEPTEMBER 1990

Condition 1 is amended to read as follows:

1A Proponent Commitments

In implementing the proposal, including the proposed amendment to extend the duration of operations reported on in Environmental Protection Authority Bulletin 684, the proponent shall fulfil the commitments (which are not inconsistent with the conditions or procedures contained in this statement) made in the Consultative Environmental Review and published in Environmental Protection Authority Bulletin 436, Appendix 2. (A copy of the commitments is attached.)

1B Implementation

Subject to the conditions in this amended statement, the manner of detailed implementation of the proposal shall conform in substance with that set out in any designs, specifications, plans or other technical material submitted by the proponent to the Environmental Protection Authority with the proposal. Where, in the course of that detailed implementation, the proponent seeks to change those designs, specifications, plans or other technical material in any way that the Minister for the Environment determines on the advice of the Environmental Protection Authority, is not substantial, those changes may be effected.

Condition 3 is amended to read as follows:

The proponent shall provide annual reports to the Environmental Protection Authority showing monthly breakdowns of the sources and amounts of woodchips exported. The proponent shall make these reports available to the public.

Condition 4 is amended to read as follows:

The duration of this proposal shall not exceed four years from the date of commencement of implementation, i.e. April 1995.

The following conditions and procedures are inserted following condition 5:

6 Compliance Auditing

In order to ensure that environmental conditions and commitments are met, an audit system is required.

- 6-1 The proponent shall prepare periodic "Progress and Compliance Reports", to help verify the environmental performance of this project, in consultation with the Environmental Protection Authority.

Procedure

- 1 The Environmental Protection Authority is responsible for verifying compliance with the conditions contained in this statement, with the exception

of conditions stating that the proponent shall meet the requirements of either the Minister for the Environment or any other government agency.

- 2 If the Environmental Protection Authority, other government agency or proponent is in dispute concerning compliance with the conditions contained in this statement, that dispute will be determined by the Minister for the Environment.

References

Environmental Protection Authority (1988b) The Western Australian Woodchip Industry, Report and recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority (Bulletin 329).

Southern Plantations Chip Company Pty Ltd (1990) Consultative Environmental Review - Proposal for the export of woodchips through the Port of Bunbury: Variation of McLean Consolidated Pty Ltd (1988) project.

Environmental Protection Authority (1990) Proposal for the export of woodchips through the Port of Bunbury: variation of McLeans consolidated Pty Ltd (1988) project. Report and recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority (Bulletin 436).