



# Tasmanian Greenweek

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## This Week

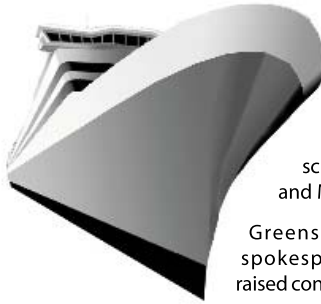
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## Quote of the Week

*"If there was more transparency about the workings of Forestry Tasmania, then at least the taxpayers, who are the owners of the forest resource, would know how much we have risked."*

**Tony McCall, senior lecturer in politics at the University of Tasmania, speaking about Southwood, The Sunday Tasmanian, 7 November, 2004, p 15.**

## Sydney Ferry Not All Plain Sailing



The Tasmanian Greens have commented on statements from the TT Line regarding a cut to Spirit of Tasmania sailing schedules, for both its Sydney and Melbourne runs.

Greens Opposition Transport spokesperson Kim Booth MHA raised concerns about whether there was an adequate contingency plan built into the original Business Case for Spirit III to ensure that repayments are met, especially given that the reduced sailing times are to take effect during the peak tourism period.

"The Greens believe it is of serious concern to Tasmania's tourism industry, that the TT Line has been forced to reduce the sailing schedules for both Spirit III (Spirit of Tasmania) to Sydney, and Spirits One and Two to Melbourne, but unfortunately it does not come as a surprise given the drop by 15% in passenger numbers this financial year," Mr Booth said.

"The announced schedule change for Spirit III amounts effectively to a 33% decrease in scheduled sailings to and from Sydney."

"The cancellation of some Melbourne sailings also highlights

the fact that despite government rhetoric to the contrary, the Sydney sailings may be having an effect on the viability of the Melbourne services as well."

"This highlights the fact that the government's original claims regarding the viability of a Sydney service were more of a P.R. exercise rather than a genuine business case"

"Given that the original business case for the Sydney Ferry was based on a booking level of around 90%, the government now has a serious problem on its hands to meet the repayment schedule without stripping funds from other areas of need in Tasmania," said Mr Booth

"The Greens have always been fully supportive of the two ferries on the Melbourne run, however, we have had reservations about the lack of government transparency regarding the viability and financial risk of a Sydney service."

"I have asked a number of responsible questions regarding the repayment commitments in the Spirit III business case since the announcement of the Sydney Ferry, and the government's response has been to stonewall and prevaricate rather than answering those serious questions with a serious answer," Mr Booth said.

## Beware Lennon's Waterfront Power Grab

The Tasmanian Greens have drawn attention to substantial drawbacks contained in Paul Lennon's legislation to take planning for the Hobart waterfront away from the Hobart City Council following strong concerns expressed at the Citizens for Hobart Waterfront forum last week.

Greens Opposition Leader Peg Putt MHA is concerned that the community will be disenfranchised, losing rights to representation and appeal on individual waterfront developments and with approvals by an unelected, unaccountable authority handpicked by the Premier with a mission to work to facilitate developers' plans.

"Whilst there is an obvious need to lift our game on waterfront planning for Sullivan's Cove, Paul Lennon's so-called solution is a frightening move to disenfranchise the community at the pointy end of the approvals process for individual developments and to put an unelected, unaccountable Authority in charge," Ms Putt said.

"Citizens who want development on our precious waterfront to be sensitive and to retain a say in what happens, especially on what is now public property, should be very worried about Paul Lennon's power grab and let Members of Parliament know of their concerns."

"These dramatic changes to decision making for Sullivan's Cove are on line to be pushed through Parliament in a fortnight's time and the community will be shut out of the vital decisions for 10 years while Lennon does deals with developers."

"After the forum on these radical changes for waterfront planning for Sullivan's Cove I am even more alarmed about the implications of Lennon's power grab," said Ms Putt.

## Greens To Investigate State Industrial Manslaughter Legislation

The Tasmanian Greens last week said that the Greens had already tabled Industrial Manslaughter legislation in the Australian Senate, and would consider introducing legislation into the State Parliament which would create the crimes of industrial manslaughter and industrial assault.

Greens Opposition Industrial Relations spokesperson Nick McKim MHA said that the Lennon Government has a poor record of legislating to protect worker's rights, and he feared that the investigation initiated by the State ALP Conference would be nothing more than delaying tactics.

"Nationally more people die at work than on the roads, and no Tasmanian worker should have to risk death or serious injury as a result of the negligence of their employer," Mr McKim said.

"The Greens are putting the Government on notice that it must not continue to erode workers' rights in favour of Government mates at the top end of town."

"Given the Lennon Labor Government's appalling decision to prevent workers who have suffered less than 30 percent impairment from taking common law action against their employer, Tasmanian workers are entitled to feel less than optimistic that the Government will introduce industrial manslaughter legislation."

"The motion debated at State ALP Conference was watered down to suit a Parliamentary Labor Party which is far more likely to act on behalf of its corporate mates than Tasmanian workers."

Mr McKim said that the Greens had a proud track record in pursuing safe and responsible workplaces with Greens' Senator Kerry Nettle tabling industrial manslaughter legislation in the Senate on the 4th August 2004.

## Government Secrecy Over Pokies Deal No Surprise

The Tasmanian Greens have described as a dereliction of duty to the Tasmanian people, revelations that the Labor government did not seek independent advice on what financial returns the State could expect to receive under the renegotiated poker machines deal with Federal Hotels last year.

Greens Opposition Leader and Treasury spokesperson Peg Putt MHA also hit out at the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which conducted an inquiry into the Federal Hotels deal last year, questioning why the Committee's so called investigation did not reveal, or consider significant, critical information such as the lack of independent advice, which has since come to light due to the investigation of a media outlet, *The Mercury*.

"At the time of the PAC's Inquiry into the Federal Hotel's deal the Greens were warning that the Committee would have as much bite as a toothless tiger and in fact would merely whitewash the government's actions, a fear which has now been confirmed by the FoI related revelations," Ms Putt said.

"Treasury should have sought independent advice as to the financial return to the State from such a renegotiated licence, which other states have demonstrated is standard responsible due diligence procedure."

"It is now confirmed that the sole consideration of government was to facilitate the best deal possible for their mates at the big end of town on a timetable stamped by the Federal group, utterly neglecting

to get the best deal for Tasmanians despite the ongoing concerns about the misery inflicted upon the community due to pokies expansion in pubs and clubs."

"This is inexcusable dereliction of duty by the Labor government."

"The Federal Group have a favoured status with the Labor government, similar to that enjoyed by Gunns Ltd, and this government seems to think that their role is to broker favourable deals for these corporate mates."

"The Greens have been pursuing the need for the government to come clean about any independent assessment or due diligence of the Deed, and what the estimated value to the state is compared with the value for Federals, but have never obtained a clear answer."

Ms Putt reminded that the Treasurer at the time was Dr David Crean in the Upper House and therefore was unavailable for the Greens to question in the House of Assembly, where instead Labor fronted Steven Kons MHA as Cabinet Secretary to respond to gaming questions.

Greens Opposition Gaming spokesperson Kim Booth MHA submitted to and appeared before the Public Accounts Inquiry into the Federal Hotels Deed in August 2003, during which concerns over the lack of due diligence was raised, but the Greens are excluded from representation on the Public Accounts Committee.

## Lennon's Smear Tactics Attempt Shut Down Vigorous Political Debate

The Tasmanian Greens have drawn attention to the use of smear tactics allegedly by the Premier Paul Lennon's office to try and discredit the Communications Electrical Plumbing Union's Kevin Harkins at the ALP conference after he apparently dared to differ on forest policy, pointing out that the tactics of bullying and intimidation to try and silence opponents had become the hallmark of the Lennon government.

Greens Opposition Leader Peg Putt MHA accused the Premier of being unwilling to debate issues in dispute, preferring to attack the messenger, and said that this belligerence which is also routinely displayed in Parliament was effecting the quality of political debate in Tasmania.

"The thin-skinned belligerence of the Premier's office was displayed at the weekend when a unionist who dared to differ with the Premier was subjected to smear tactics, and this bullying is the hallmark of the Lennon government," Ms Putt said.

"Rather than debate issues in dispute the Lennon way is to attack the messenger, often with scurrilous accusations, and a climate of fear and intimidation has grown up in the community around speaking out on sensitive issues," Ms Putt said.

## Call To Keep 'Gardening Australia' In Tasmania

The Tasmanian Greens voiced their strong concerns that the popular ABC show 'Gardening Australia' will leave Tasmania and will change under current plans of ABC Management which are being discussed in meetings with the Tasmanian staff who initiated and have produced the program for fifteen years.

Greens Opposition Leader Peg Putt MHA said that the proposed relocation of the show to Melbourne would impact the show, would impact jobs as no Tasmanian production staff would be employed on the program any longer, and that the role of the show in attracting visitation to Tasmania would also be compromised.

"We need to be very clear that fifteen jobs will be directly affected by this proposed re-location of Gardening Australia, that these people who have created and nurtured the show and put it all together each week will no longer be working on it," Ms Putt said.

"The show will also change as a result of any relocation, and the flagship role it has played in attracting visitors to Tasmania will be lost."

"No good reason has been given for this show being uprooted from its long term production base in Tasmania, and the proposed alternatives are likely to have a short life span and we'll see production staff lose their jobs and Tasmania lose this skills base."

Ms Putt called on Tasmanian supporters of Gardening Australia to lobby ABC Management to change their decision and to keep the show in Tasmania.

## Greens Open Hobart Premiere of Outfoxed

Greens Opposition Leader Peg Putt MHA opened the Hobart premiere of *Outfoxed* on Tuesday 2 November at the State Cinema, speaking on the media ownership changes facing the Federal Senate in the coming months.

Ms Putt told the audience that the Howard government has recently restarted its efforts to lift cross-media and foreign ownership restrictions which were originally put in place to ensure that, through diverse ownership of Australia's media, public life be reported in a fair and open manner.

Cross-media ownership relates to common ownership of electronic (radio or TV) and newspaper media licenses across a license area. Foreign ownership laws restrict foreign persons from controlling a licence.

"In an anticipated flurry of mergers and acquisitions, Rupert Murdoch's News Ltd and other large media corporations stand to gain a much bigger slice of the local media pie if current cross-media and foreign ownership laws are lifted," Ms Putt said.

"This means less choice in the marketplace, possibly leaving Tasmanians deciding between just two media outlets and the ABC which, under the Howard Government, has failed to gain much needed funding increases."



Ms Putt said recent examples of media bias by Murdoch-owned news outlets during the last federal election were deliberately aimed at deceiving voters. A 31

August Herald Sun article made damaging claims about Greens' policies without contacting the Greens regarding the story, instead choosing to take comment from a pro-Liberal think tank.

Ms Putt pointed to the expanding numbers of online independent news outlets like [crickey.com.au](http://crickey.com.au), [tasmaniantimes.com](http://tasmaniantimes.com), [indymedia.org](http://indymedia.org) and others as alternatives to the mainstream press.

"The good news may come from the independents who continue to reach out to the growing audience on the web. There are thousands of people around Australia who don't want their news funnelled through one or two large corporations with vested interests," Ms Putt said.

### Your Greens Representatives in Tasmania's State Parliament



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