



# Tasmanian Greenweek

December 17th, 2004

SPECIAL EDITION

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## SUPPORT THE 'GUNNS 20'

Gunns Ltd has served writs on 20 targets including the Wilderness Society, Doctors for Native Forests, the Huon Valley Environment Centre, Senator Bob Brown (Leader of the Australian Greens), Peg Putt MHA (Leader of the Tasmanian Greens) and numerous individual community campaigners.

The case is 'industrial' style litigation, alleging conspiracy, interference with trade and business and defamation. Nine different campaigns are cited.

This is the largest corporate SLAPP (Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation) suit ever launched in Australia and could create important precedents in relation to the rights of individual and community groups to speak out and take action.

This legal attack is now a significant public interest issue. It has galvanised the community. Of course the Greens will not stop speaking up for our forests. An important new dimension has been added to our campaign, the right to freedom of speech and peaceful protest.



Simon Brown and Greens Opposition Leader Peg Putt MHA, two of the "Gunns 20", stand gagged before a crowd of supporters at the Free Speech Vigil, Franklin Square, Hobart, 15 December 2004 .

## WHAT IS THE ACTION?

Gunns allege that Leader of the Australian Greens Senator Bob Brown, Leader of the Tasmanian Greens Peg Putt MHA, the Wilderness Society and a total of 20 defendants have been involved in campaigns against it. They filed a 216-page writ in the Victorian Supreme Court on 13 December 2004 seeking total damages of \$6 360 483.00

**(SLAPP = Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation)**

## WHO ARE THE "GUNNS 20"?

The "Gunns 20" is a name given to the group of defendants in the case. The defendants are:

**First defendant - Alec Marr**

**Second defendant - Geoff Law**

**Third defendant - Russell Hanson**

**Fourth defendant - Leanne Minshull**

**Fifth defendant - Heidi Douglas**

**Sixth defendant - The Wilderness Society Inc**

**Seventh defendant - Adam Burling**

**Eighth defendant - Louise Morris**

**Ninth defendant - Simon Brown**

**Tenth defendant - Robert Brown (Senator Bob Brown)**

**Eleventh defendant - Margaret Putt (Peg Putt MHA)**

**Twelfth defendant - Helen Gee**

**Thirteenth defendant - Ben Morrow**

**Fourteenth defendant - Lou Geraghty**

**Fifteenth defendant - Neil Funnell**

**Sixteenth defendant - Brian Dimmick**

**Seventeenth defendant - Huon Valley Environment Centre Inc**

**Eighteenth defendant - Peter Pullinger**

**Nineteenth defendant - Frank Nicklason**

**Twentieth defendant - Doctors for Native Forests Inc**

## Quote of the Week

*"They can take every penny. They can take every peaceful night's sleep. They can take every home comfort.*

*They will never stop me campaigning against their vile destruction of Tasmania's forests and its wildlife."*

**Greens Senator Bob Brown**, "Gunns, gags and the Greens", 7:30 Report, ABC TV, 16 December, 2004.

## WHO ARE THE PLAINTIFFS?

**Gunns Limited; Robin Simons and Heather Simons, trading as T&H Investments**

**Solicitors for the Plaintiffs:** EMA Legal, Level 3, 175 Flinders Lane, Melbourne. Ph. 03 9650 7381.

**Barristers:** Stephen Howells and Mark Irving

## NEXT STEPS

The defendants must first tell the court that they will appear in response to the writ (within 21 days in the case of Tasmanians; 10 days in the case of those living in Victoria). They have to organise their legal representation and decide on a strategy for the defence.

The case may take months to come to court and years to conclude. The defendants and their supporters face enormous costs in money, time, stress and worry.

The outpouring of public support for the defendants is enormously heartening, with offers of all kinds of help.

**Do not be silenced** -- the "Gunns 20" campaign stands for democracy, free speech and the protection of Tasmania's forests.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO RIGHT NOW

### ■ Donate to the Defence fund:

Money can be given to any or all of the defendants – through:

Donating to "Gunns 20" Fund via Senator Bob Brown- Cheques/money orders can be made out to Bob Brown (Gunns 20) - please include all contact details in order to be receipted and post to GPO Box 1562 Hobart 7000 or in person at the Greens Shop 230 Liverpool St Hobart. For more info call 03 62 341 633.

### ■ Offer other services:

For the moment please send a message to Peg Putt's office preferably by email outlining your skills and contact details - greens@parliament.tas.gov.au

### ■ Write to the papers and ring talkback radio

### ■ Participate in actions as they are organised

### ■ For more information and a copy of the Writ

[www.bobbrown.org.au](http://www.bobbrown.org.au)

Watch for future updates on the Tasmanian Greens website

[www.tas.greens.org.au](http://www.tas.greens.org.au)



Wednesday, 15 December 2004, at the Free Speech Vigil, Franklin Square, Hobart.

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



**Peg Putt**  
Denison



**Nick McKim**  
Franklin



**Kim Booth**  
Bass



**Tim Morris**  
Lyons

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