



Minister for Resources Guy Barnett (fourth from left) with Huon Resource Development Group members Brendan Hickey, Rick Watson, Harry Roberts, Alan Duggan and George Harris (president) last Thursday. 1951

‘Renewed confidence’ group hears

Huon Resource Development Group has heard of “renewed confidence” following more investment in the native forest sector of the timber industry.

Speaking at the group’s monthly meeting last Thursday, Minister for Resources, Guy Barnett MP, outlined the State Government’s vision for a sustainable forest industry, including resource security for the legislated requirement of 137,000 cubic metres of high quality eucalypt sawlog.

To enable long-term sustainability this means the government will make the Future Potential Production Forest (FPPF) land available for access for commercial harvesting from July 1, 2018 – two years earlier than initially envisaged.

This will apply to just over 357,000 hectares of the FPPF land, all of which was managed for timber harvesting over many decades, and has a

high density of roads and is mainly regrowth forests, although it will not apply to the 35,000 hectares of claimed wilderness but formerly production forest which has been incorporated into the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Future Potential Production Forest land will in future be known as Production Forest land to reflect its intended usage.

Mr Barnett also advised that the Government forestry business will remain a GBE, but will be downsized and will be leaner, more efficient and more agile and will have a more defined commercial focus.

It will also be renamed.

The new name will be Sustainable Timber Tasmania, which will begin operating from July 1, 2017.

The Government’s forestry reform plan is aimed at financial sustainability and job security for thousands of Tasmanian workers including resource security for the iconic Special Timbers sector which was one of the biggest casualties of the Labor-Green forestry deal.

The Minister will ensure access for raw material supply for our fine furniture makers, and provide certainty of access for Tasmanian timber boat builders, whose workmanship is recognised as world class.

While in the Huon the Minister met with other businesses and groups concerned with issues such as opportunities for bio-energy, and for better utilisation of forest harvesting and sawmill residues.

HRDG president, George Harris, congratulated the Minister on his willingness to listen to the community and engage with stakeholders.