

Wolfgang Wissmann Consulting Engineers

ABN 80 706 809 133

176 Bowens Jetty Road, P.O. Box 64
Beaconsfield, Tasmania, 7270
Phone/Fax (03) 6383 1458
E-Mail wwissmann@bigpond.com

September 17, 2006

Resource Planning and Development Commission
3rd floor, 144-148 Macquarie St, Hobart 7000
Submission: Draft IIS-Gunns LTD Pulp Mill Proposal

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am writing to you as a professional Engineer, deeply concerned about the public safety on our roads in Tasmania.

As you may be well aware of the fact that we experience one log truck accident / roll over every second week, some of them with fatal consequences. It is just a matter of time until we have to wear a mayor tragedy like a school bus being rolled over by a log truck.

I have done everything in my power as a Professional to draw the attention to this unprofessional and selfish operation by Gunns and the logging industry.

After being ignored by Gunns, I went to the politicians and started the public debate, which initiated some meetings with the Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources. For your information I enclose some correspondence I had with Tony Beard explaining the context and purpose of the matter. The discussions and meetings eventually obliged the Tasmanian government to initiate an independent assessment by Ternz Engineering from New Zealand.

I received a call from them on the 24.05.05 regarding further information of my investigations. During this phone conversation I realised that Ternz takes my recommendation of speed reduction and loading height reduction much further.

Unfortunately the final report from Ternz Engineering has not been released to the public, despite the numerous requests by Parliamentarian Kim Booth.

With the increase of log truck traffic caused by the new Pulp mill, I am terrified and deeply concerned for the safety of public road users.

I have no trust in Gunns doing the right thing; this is based on my own experience on a pure professional level. I therefore urge you to consider the consequences of ignoring this matter. There should be no approval of the Pulp mill before this transport issue is not solved to the minimum standard of New Zealand.

Ignoring the transport / log truck problem is negligent and a criminal offence, which eventually finds a prosecutor trying to compensate the victims.

Please make sure that the RPDC is not seen as a cover up for Gunns ruthless behaviour towards the people of Tasmania.

Kind regards

Wolfgang Wissmann
MIEAust. CPEng
Chartered Professional Engineer
Membership No.851340

Wolfgang Wissmann Consulting Engineers

ABN 80706809133

176 Bowens Jetty Road, P.O.Box 64
Beaconsfield, Tasmania 7270

Phone / Fax (03) 63831458

Date: 17.10.03

Mobile 0419 108357

To: Secretary of
Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources
Copy to Tony Beard
GPO Box 936
Hobart 7001

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After a discussion over the phone with Tony Beard, I was advised to raise my concerns over the danger, that log and wood chip trucks present to the public, directly with you.

As a professional mechanical Senior Engineer, I have been asked to perform a full study on truck vehicle rollover stability on behalf of NF (North Forest Product). This study took place about two years ago and was a follow up by NF on a number of accidents, where bin trailers and log trailers rolled over causing fatal injuries and damage. It was recognised by the industry that immediate and long-term changes have to be made to the transport operation of logs and chips to guarantee the public safety and the compliance to common AS-standards.

As part of the study I have taken the dimensions of 5 different vehicle types with the help of a surveyor at the mill in Burnie.

Examined were two different kinds of Quad-dog trailers, one Triaxle-Jnker trailer, one Triaxle Folding Scale and one Bin trailer. The vehicles were loaded to a typical pattern and were just caught on their way to the unloading station. All the vehicles were loaded with plantation timber, which guaranteed an even density over the load. The weight of each vehicle was recorded on a weight bridge with load and afterwards without load. Back in the office I established a drawing of each vehicle and determined the centroid of each vehicle with the recorded weights and loading height.

Then I started to calculate the rollover stability for each vehicle as measured out in the field.

Soon I realised that the threshold against rollover on most of the measured vehicles was very low and below a safety factor of 1, which is the absolute minimum for any design that is out in the public. I have to stress that my calculation did assume a flat road surface and did not consider any camber in the road. I also based my calculation on a ridged

suspension (leaf spring) in the vehicle. Both assumptions will rather provide an optimistic result.

I also have to stress that poor maintained air suspension in log trucks could be lethal as far as rollover stability is concerned. If the air bags of the suspension do not work a 100%, which means maintain the optimum air pressure all the time, the tipping line of the vehicle moves towards the centre of the vehicle, making it very unstable.

As far as I know, there are no required maintenance schedules for these trucks and there are no auditing systems in place that cover this issue. As a matter of fact, the Road Department of Tasmania allows higher payload for trucks with air suspension.

Given the shocking results, I created a spreadsheet for each vehicle, which would calculate the safety factor against rollover with variables like vehicle speed, loading height of vehicle and the radius of the curve the vehicle would follow. The spreadsheet still ignored road camber and soft suspension.

The results were quite frightening and clearly showed that there is a reason for the trucks to fall over on the road (it is still happening). There is not much freeboard for any driver error to end up with an unstable vehicle.

This study was handed over to the Managers of NF and they themselves came to the quick conclusion that a reduction in loading height or vehicle speed is the short-term solution to restore public safety.

The long-term solution is in the design of future vehicles and a possible change in road regulations for longer vehicles

To cross check my study, NF used my spreadsheets and plugged in the figures of the accident investigations done by other professionals and the spreadsheet delivered the same results in done vehicle speed and road curve path combined with the loading height.

It was clearly spelled out by NF that it is rather urgent to act on this issue and reduce the speed of the trucks or introduce a loading height restriction at each mill. The loss of productivity for the truck companies should be compensated with some arrangement with the mill.

Unfortunately NF was taken over by Gunns before any of this could be implemented. Soon after the takeover, the Safety department with the ongoing work was terminated and the people I have worked for left the organization.

I had another follow up meeting with some Gunns managers but nothing eventuated from this meeting. Some of these managers also left the organization.

However I followed my duty as a Professional Engineer, being aware of a public hazard, to do everything to eliminate this danger. Plus I have listened to the public debate about log trucks being a hazard on the road and the frequency of log trucks on the road is constantly on the rise.

The West Tamar council is also concerned about the high number of log trucks passing the school busses on the West Tamar highway.

To get the most attention I bought some Gunns shares to be able to attend to the annual shareholder meeting in Launceston in early 2002. There I spoke directly to the Chairman John Gay.

In front of the whole audience of shareholders and Gunns board members I raised my concerns about this issue and asked the question why the project of log- truck road safety was stopped.

I received an appraisal for my delivered work and was assured that the Gunns board will follow up on this issue and introduce some changes.

However nothing happened over the last year and I am afraid nothing will happen. It is clear that any solution will cost money to the logging industry. It is the duty of Gunns to make sure that the log trucks do not impose a danger to the public.

I am now at a point, where I am prepared to hand over my study to a body like Work Place Standard and offer my help to force Gunns to stop this practise

Please give this issue some serious consideration.

Kind regards

Wolfgang Wissmann
MIEAust. CPEng
Chartered Professional Engineer
Membership No.851340