



*media release*

Tasmanian Liberals

## **Will Hodgman MP**

Leader of the Opposition

Sunday 31 August, 2008

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### ***Bartlett's embarrassing backflip***

State Opposition leader, Will Hodgman, today expressed concern about Premier David Bartlett's game of political brinkmanship over the pulp mill.

In his rush to be all things to all people, Premier David Bartlett has been forced into yet another embarrassing backflip, this time regarding the Forestry Tas/Gunns Ltd wood supply agreement.

On Thursday, Mr Bartlett said he would 'need convincing' to allow Forestry Tasmania to extend the wood supply agreement it has with mill proponent Gunns Limited.

"After apparently coming to an understanding that the wood supply agreement between Forestry Tasmania and Gunns Limited is not something he should fiddle around with for political reasons, Premier Bartlett is now looking very silly.

"This Labor Government has an appalling record when it comes to facilitating major projects in this State, and the latest episode of political brinkmanship by Premier Bartlett is highly counterproductive to achieving a good outcome," Mr Hodgman said.

"New Premier David Bartlett has exposed his inexperience, and his lack of appreciation of commercial realities. We are quickly coming to know the Premier as someone who bases his decisions on political opportunities.

“But this simplistic, symbolic drawing of a line in the sand is not the way to manage a major project or a major commercial agreement which are both subject to complex commercial issues.

“In relation to the November 30 deadline imposed by the Bartlett Government on the \$15 million sovereign risk agreement, the State Opposition believes a degree of flexibility should be allowed, rather than risk a \$2 billion project for the sake of a matter of days or weeks,” Mr Hodgman said.

The State Opposition continues to strongly support the pulp mill, which is subject to stringent environmental guidelines and represents the biggest ever private investment in Tasmania.

**Further information: Brad Nowland – 0439 614 893**