

## **PULP MILL AND HEALTH**

### **Background**

The Tasmanian Resource Planning and Development Commission will soon decide on whether to approve an 800,000 air dried ton pa pulp mill.

### **Key Issues for Patients**

1. The Launceston air quality is poor in winter particularly. According to government information, there are an estimated eight additional deaths per year as a result of air pollution in the Launceston area. This pulp mill design incorporates the burning of wood to provide power. Air emissions resulting from this have the potential to add to the existing adverse respiratory load of particles in Launceston.
2. Prediction of adverse impacts from air emissions from a pulp mill requires high-quality scientific modelling. Any model is only as good as data input e.g. number of monitoring stations, position of monitoring stations, nature of model etc.
3. The potential adverse health and environmental effects from a new pulp mill will be strongly influenced by the technology used in the pulping process.
4. Pulp mills are often associated with odour problems. There is scientific literature, which demonstrates that odour is not just a nuisance factor, but also adverse to health.
5. An increase in road traffic is likely to cause an increase in road fatalities, air emissions and noise.

### **Key Issues for Governments**

The Government cannot allow a pulp mill to proceed that does not meet the public health concerns of the AMA.

### **AMA Position**

**The AMA supports a pulp mill in Tasmania as long as it satisfies, beyond doubt, the following five public health issues.**

1. Any pulp mill in the Tamar Valley must not increase already existing mortality and morbidity from atmospheric pollutants.
2. Reliable air shed modeling must underpin any predictions of respiratory health impacts from a new pulp mill, taking into account multiple emission sources i.e. existing industries, truck movements, wood heaters, in addition to a new pulp mill. Current monitoring of air pollution in Launceston and the Tamar Valley has concentrated on PM10 rather than PM2.5. The smaller particles represented by the PM2.5 measurement are believed to be more closely associated with adverse health effects. Therefore, closer monitoring of PM2.5 is required.
3. A pre-requisite for any new pulp mill in the Tamar Valley is modern technology which ensures minimal atmospheric pollution without additional loads to the community, particularly in Launceston.
4. Any new mill must not expose people living or working more than 1 km from the pulp mill to any odour on more than 5 days per year.
5. Any new pulp mill proposal must demonstrate effective systems to deal with the additional risk of road fatalities, and particularly in settled areas, noise and vehicle emissions from additional road traffic.

For further information contact (03) 62232047