

## Greens back old mines

**Exclusive**  
Mathew Dunckley

The Australian Greens are supporting mining in the politically and environmentally sensitive Tarkine area of Tasmania, as the party looks to defuse criticism that it opposes economic development.

Greens senator Peter Whish-Wilson said the party strongly opposed new open-cut mines in the area, which is under consideration for World Heritage listing, but would accept plans to revive some moth-balled mines.

"The whole line that is being pushed against us in Tasmania is that we want to shut down the mining industry, which is absolute rubbish," he said.

"Mining is the biggest contributor to gross state product; no one is talking about shutting it down."

The Greens' qualified support for mining in the wilderness area on Tasmania's west coast comes as the political battle has intensified in recent weeks.

The state Liberal Party will host a forum in Burnie on Monday which Opposition Leader Will Hodgman says will "combat the mistruths" about mining in the "so-called" Tarkine. The Australian Workers Union and the Labor party have strongly backed new mines to offset job losses in other Tasmanian industries such as forestry.

In support of the Greens' position Senator Whish-Wilson highlighted Bright Phase Resources' proposal to reopen the Cleveland tin mine, Luina, which closed in the 1980s.

Tailings at the site are leaching acid and other contaminants into the Whyte River. The mine's redevelopment, spurred by rising tin prices, could improve the environment.

"By cleaning up the tailings, we are going to get a pretty positive result. It costs the taxpayer nothing to remediate the area and creates jobs," he said, adding that the approach was consistent with World Heritage guidelines.

"It satisfies our values as conservationists. Also this has the ability to create wealth and jobs."

Senator Whish-Wilson said the existing mine infrastructure, such as roads, meant the proposal was less damaging than some proposed mines where exploration rigs had been helicoptered into the forest.



Peter Whish-Wilson says reviving old mines will add jobs. Photo Peter Mathew

He acknowledged that even the qualified support was potentially difficult for the Greens.

"It is a very sensitive issue for us. It is not an easy thing for the Greens to support any mining proposals in a World Heritage Area," he said.

Senator Whish-Wilson said it was important to look for common ground over the controversial issue.

"Tasmania has been so racked by conflict I'm sick of it, everyone is so sick of it. We support existing mining on the west coast," he said.

"What we don't want to see is 58 exploration licences in a World Heritage area."

Tarkine National Coalition chairman Scott Jordan said his organisation supported the Greens' position and he had given Senator Whish-Wilson a tour of the site.

He said the Cleveland mine could generate 200 jobs that would last a decade, which was comparable to the highly controversial Venture

Minerals strip mining proposal.

A smaller proposal at Burns Peak would generate about 20 jobs over two years and also potentially solve substantial environmental issues at another old mine.

Tasmanian Minerals Council executive director Terry Long said the Green's policy would not make a material difference to the industry's prospects in the region.

"It is a position they have taken so they can say publicly that they don't oppose mining in the area," he said.

Mr Long said that was likely a response to a "ground swell" of community anger over the Greens' opposition to mining.

Mr Hodgman said in a statement this week that 44 per cent of Tasmania was already "locked up".

A decision is expected in the coming months from the federal government on a national heritage listing, which is a precursor to the world listing.

## Parents unhappy with MLC deal

Mathew Dunckley

Parents of students at Melbourne's prestigious Methodist Ladies' College vow their campaign to reinstate ousted Principal Rosa Storelli will continue despite her settlement with the school's board over her sacking.

Ms Storelli's supporters have planned a protest march outside the school on Monday, the first day back at school since the scandal erupted over the long-serving principal's removal.

The board removed Ms Storelli saying it had lost confidence in the principal, who had been at the school for 15 years, after a dispute about alleged over-payments totalling \$700,000. After a bitter public wrangle, the board and Ms Storelli released a joint statement on Friday saying they had agreed she would not return to the school.

Under the terms of the agreement, Ms Storelli will repay \$100,000 she claims to have raised with the board in January. Ms Storelli also secured a \$300,000 termination payment.

Protest Organiser Tracey Cocks said the situation was a "dreadful mess" and called for the board to resign. She said the community had expected that if the dispute was resolved Ms Storelli would be reinstated.

"We want her to continue as principal and not be bullied out of her job because the board says that it cannot work with her."

"Monday will be the first day since her sacking that we can bring the entire college community together to voice their total disgust at the actions of the board and the board's lack of synergies with the values of MLC," she said.

"Our plan is to demonstrate our sincere concern about the board's inability to be accountable to our MLC community."

The joint statement said the overpayment was the result of "accounting errors made by the college over an extended period" for which the board said Ms Storelli was not responsible.

Board chair Louise Adler said she was pleased the matter "has now been resolved and the board and the school community can focus on managing the school and supporting students as the year

draws to a close." The statement said the board and Ms Storelli had "very different views and very different advice" about the size of the overpayment.

"Both parties have recognised the need to resolve this dispute and to give the MLC community, especially the students and staff, finality."

The board features several prominent businesspeople including Brendan Fleiter, who ran the Crazy John's group of companies; Patricia Cross, a director of National Australia Bank, JBWere and Qantas; Ahmed Fahour, chief executive of Australia Post; and Tony Peake, a managing partner at PwC.

The board said Ms Storelli was not accused of dishonest conduct.

"Ms Storelli's employment was not terminated for serious misconduct. Rather, the relationship between Ms Storelli and the board has

**We want her to continue as principal and not be bullied out of her job because the board cannot work with her.**

Tracey Cocks, protest organiser

irretrievably broken down," the statement said.

"Ms Storelli has a reputation as an educator of the highest calibre."

The statement said that Ms Storelli "joins" Ms Adler in acknowledging the damage caused to the standing of the school by the scandal. Ms Storelli acknowledged the board's responsibility for choosing who should lead the college, it said.

Ms Storelli and Ms Adler declined to comment.

Isabel Thomas Dobson, who ordered the parties to mediate on behalf of the Uniting Church, said: "The confidential agreement was a decision of the parties themselves and that must be respected."

"The most important task now is to support students and staff as they return for the final term of the year."

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\$0.47	▲	0.0
\$7.02	▲	0.3
\$7.22	▲	0.3
\$3.07	▲	0.1
\$1.29	▲	0.0
\$1.45	▲	0.0
\$1.55	▲	0.0

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#### Daylight saving

NSW, ACT, Vic and Tas move to daylight saving time on Sunday when clocks move forward 1 hour from 2am. SA and Broken Hill move their clocks forward half an hour. Queensland, WA and the NT do not observe daylight saving.



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