



THE HON PETER GARRETT AM MP

MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND THE ARTS

TRANSCRIPT

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
DOORSTOP INTERVIEW
PORT ARTHUR
TASMANIA**

15 AUGUST 2008

SUBJECTS: Paroo River; Gunns pulp mill

JOURNALIST: Just on the Paroo situation, have you been briefed on that and what is your view of new developments there that are perhaps in breach of a moratorium setup in 2001

GARRETT: We would take any breaches or alleged breaches very seriously. The Commonwealth is investigating those matters there, but we, as I understand it, I have been advised are waiting for a report from the Queensland Government. Until we get that report from the Queensland Government it's not appropriate to make any further comment other than we take any alleged breaches or suggestions of breaches seriously.

JOURNALIST: And in general terms, is it a sign that the new body that your setting up to manage all of this, might the states just overrides it in the future as well.

GARRETT: Well, let's see what the situation is in relation to these matters. I want to be assured that there hasn't been any long-term damage to any matters of national environmental significance. They're the responsibilities I have in relation to wetlands – threatened wetlands and the link – and let us see what material is brought through from the Queensland Government as a consequence of this investigation/

JOURNALIST: Mr Garrett, why did you ask Gunns for a timeline [inaudible]?

GARRETT: We've received a number of modules from Gunns and some of those modules went back again to Gunns for further clarification and work to be done. And, given that we're now sitting pretty much only a couple of months away from the final time when modules have to be lodged it was

appropriate to communicate to Gunns the fact that there is ultimately a timetable around this process. There are only four modules that I have approved. There are no other modules that have come to me to that point in time. So, it is just a case of saying look, let's be clear about the fact that these things will need to happen within a timetabled period which we all know is October 4 and a communication to that effect was made.

JOURNALIST: [inaudible]

GARRETT: That information hasn't been conveyed to me directly.

JOURNALIST: Will you extend that timeline if required?

GARRETT: Well I have always had exactly the same approach on this matter and I will continue to have that approach and it is this – we will assess each of the modules as they come to us under the terms of the conditions of the approval that was given to Gunns in terms of bringing this matter forward, under the relevant Act, with the conditions that were identified. But remember, these modules have got to be contemplated by the Department, by the Independent Experts Group and then come to the Minister. Each one will be treated properly, diligently and rigorously under the EPBC Act and in accordance with the conditions that attached to the original approval.

JOURNALIST: [inaudible]

GARRETT: Well again, I simply take the modules as they come to me. One thing I would say is that with that large number of modules still needing to come to me it is very clear from my point of view that I want to see them come to me in a timely fashion if they are going to be produced.

JOURNALIST: [inaudible]

GARRETT: Well I am going to take each of these modules as they come to us. The timetable that is in place, that has been identified, is the timetable that remains.

Okay, thanks everybody.

[ENDS]