



MEDIA RELEASE

Protecting the right to work

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Resources

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will legislate to address concerns raised by the High Court about the *Workplaces (Protection from Protestors) Act*.

Jobs are the number one priority of the majority Hodgman Liberal Government, and we are committed to ensuring Tasmanians can go to work and run their business in a safe manner free from interference and disruption.

We believe that it is a fundamental right for Tasmanians to be able to go about their lawful work without the threat of protestors intentionally shutting down and harming Tasmanian businesses.

Unfortunately, we have already seen that following the High Court disallowing some aspects of our laws last year, protestors have taken that as green light to invade workplaces, including as recently as two weeks ago in a forestry coupe in the North West.

In its ruling last year, the High Court confirmed that it was a legitimate aim of the *Workplaces (Protection from Protestors) Act 2014* to protect businesses from disruptive protest.

In broad terms, the majority of the Court found that aspects of the Act were invalid as they related to forestry land. It also raised definitional and scope issues, and certain consequences within the legislation including but not limited to:

- The Act as it only relates to protestors;
- The exercise of police powers and its consequences; and
- The application of the periods of exclusion.

We have undertaken a process of review, including looking at a number of other State laws, to address the concerns raised whilst retaining the overall purpose of the legislation.

We will take firm action to fix the concerns raised by the High Court relating to certain aspects of the legislation.

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will:

- Address the High Court's concerns by amending or replacing specific sections of the *Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Act 2014* to ensure a less restrictive effect on the freedom of political communication.
- Focus on the definitional and geographical issues identified in the Judgement to make clear the intention and improve the scope and application of the *Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Act 2014*.
- Deal with the exercise of police powers within the *Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Act 2014*.
- Seek to boost protections, powers and operation of the *Forestry Management Act 2013*.

As we have always said, we want to get the balance right, to support the right of workers and businesses as well as protecting the continued right to free speech and the right to protest.
