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Guy Barnett, Minister for Resources

## **Arrogant Labor Shows Contempt for Industry Players Who Support Unlocking Forests**

Labor's outrageous mocking in Parliament today of those in the forest industry who support the Liberal Government's move to unlock forests shows how beholden the party is to minority and vested interests.

Supporters of the Government's Bill to unlock productive forests to save jobs and end the public subsidies are lining up to have their say, but Labor refuses to listen.

George Harris – ironically a long-standing member of the Labor Party – and Allan Duggan, of the Huon Resource Development Group, told the Legislative Council:

“The main reason we support this Bill is that it will give the greatest flexibility to the industry going forward and there is no valid reason for locking up any more forest.

“The suggestions that there will be no market for timber harvested within the 356,000 hectares is unfounded.

“We are aware of existing mill owners who are not FIAT members and all expressed the desire to get more access to timber and better quality timber.”

Echoing this view, Tony Stonjek, of AKS Forest Solutions, said he was aware of at least 20 smaller mills that need wood, but can't get it under current arrangements.

“Country sawmillers and small sawmillers don't currently have access to the resource . . . the country sawmillers that we have spoken to are fully supportive of the Bill and really looking forward to the outcome,” Mr Stonjek said.

Andrew Denman, from the Tasmanian Speciality Timbers Alliance, Kelly Wilton, from the group Support Tassie's Timber Industry, and Mick Kelly, from Kelly Gang Timbers, have also spoken in support of the Bill.

Showing the same contempt that it had for regional Tasmania when it forced the job-destroying forest deal upon the industry, Labor arrogantly mocked their views.

Tasmanians should know that Labor is arguing to continue subsidising non-commercial forest activities with public money, taking around \$25 million a year of funds that should be going to our hospitals and to our schools.

The Liberal Government's plan is the only one that will unlock productive forests to end the subsidies and save jobs in the industry.