



12 October 2016

Guy Barnett, Minister for Resources

Next steps in rebuilding the forest industry

The Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to rebuilding the forest industry that was so savaged by Labor and the Greens, causing the loss of thousands of jobs across regional Tasmania.

We have helped to deliver a resurgence of confidence in the industry, which is driving growth, creating jobs on the back of innovation and new opportunities.

In forestry, investment is up, production is up, exports are up and employment is up. To maintain this dramatic switch to growth we need resource security.

However, Forestry Tasmania (FT) has advised that while there is theoretically sufficient resource available in the Permanent Timber Production Zone to maintain legislated wood supply, there is an entirely separate question about what can be delivered commercially.

This advice exposes the minimum production level legislated by Labor and the Greens as expensive greenwash.

We know the anti-forestry Greens would shut the industry down, while Labor's answer would be to take public monies away from hospitals and schools to subsidise FT's commercial operations.

In contrast, the Liberal Government will clean up this mess, and we will do so in a way that helps to continue to grow the industry and enable FT to stand on its own feet.

For this Government, it is a given that we will meet our contractual wood supply obligations. What we will be talking about now is how we achieve that.

One potential opportunity is accessing earlier than the currently legislated date of April 2020 the 400,000 hectares of Future Potential Production Forest.

If the Government determines to go down this path to help meet contractual obligations we would do so by offering the private sector the opportunity to be involved.

While I will have more to say on these matters in the weeks ahead, I want to be very clear that this Government will do everything we can to support growth in the forest industry; rather than try to shut it down, as Labor and the Greens did.

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