

Beware green grab for world heritage listing

Guy Barnett warns of campaign to lock up more forests and ban \$150m mining

THOUSANDS of jobs could be lost in Tasmania's mining and forest industries in the event of another Labor-Green minority government.

They are threatened because the Greens are continuing their campaign to lock away more and more of Tasmania and because Labor has form in selling out jobs to gain government.

Green groups like the Bob Brown Foundation, Save the Tarkine and The Wilderness Society are all pushing to lock away another 680,000ha — or about 10 per cent of the state — in a massive extension to our World Heritage Area.

At the Tasmanian Mineral and Energy Council's annual conference, I revealed advice from the Department of State Growth that shows the impact of such a land grab.

Listing such a significant expanse of North-West Tasmania as World Heritage would ban mining in one of our most prospective regions, which includes more than 1000 known mineral deposits. This includes at least eight current mining leases.

Based on past expenditure, the land grab would cost the state upwards of \$150 million in mining and exploration investment over 20 years, and lock up more than 12,000ha of the Permanent Timber Production Zone and 91,000ha of our Wood Bank — the Future Potential Production Forest.

The land grab would cost a further \$250 million in the value of native forest harvesting over the next 20 years and add to the sovereign risk issues that have seriously impeded investment here for decades.

Not only would this impact on existing operations, it would also mean that future development in mining, forestry and even tourism would be impossible — denying the state many opportunities for new investment and new jobs.

This year, The Wilderness Society activists went to Poland to tell the World Heritage Committee that these areas are "Tasmania's world heritage in waiting".

There is a real danger that these extremists will gain political power if Labor does another deal with the Greens in a minority government.

And we know what happened last time to our forest industry.

The Hodgman Liberal Government remains the strongest and most consistent supporter of Tasmania's mining industry.

We know that we have an industry that is very well regulated, with companies that are extremely conscious of their responsibilities and of the need to protect the environment.

And we will keep fighting for the mining industry — and for all our productive industries — because our first priority is jobs.

Contrary to the wishful thinking of the Greens, mining has a strong future and has been enjoying a significant boost over the past 12 months.

Recently, I was pleased to announce a more than doubling of the mineral royalties collected by the State Government in just one year — up from \$15 million in 2015-16 to over \$39 million in 2016-17.

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This means more money for hospitals, schools and other vital services.

This pleasing news comes on the back of a swag of positive announcements including: **RE-OPENING** of the Henty gold mine near Queenstown, creating over 100 jobs.

GRANTING of a mining lease to Stellar Resources for their Heemskirk tin project, also near Zeehan, which could result in a mine employing up to 180 people in the region.

SALE of the Avebury nickel mine near Zeehan to Dundas Mining, a privately owned Tasmanian company, who have committed to bring the mine back into production as soon as possible.

We have also seen the beginning of work at the Mt Lyell mine on projects funded through a \$9.5 million investment by the Government that is aimed at helping to bring forward its potential restart, which could create as many as 300 direct and 750 indirect jobs.

The Liberal Government makes no apology for standing up for mining because — unlike Labor and the Greens — jobs are our number one priority.

Guy Barnett is Resources Minister in the Hodgman Liberal State Government.