



# VAFI

## VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF FOREST INDUSTRIES

Tuesday, 30 December, 2008

### REDGUM DECISION FELLS LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI) has expressed its disappointment at the State Government's decision to effectively end timber harvesting in the River Redgum region along the Murray River.

The Victorian Government today released its response to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's (VEAC) River Redgum Investigation Final Report, effectively endorsing their recommendation to ban timber harvesting in the Barmah State Forest and a large percentage of the available area in the Gunbower State Forest; an outcome the VAFI CEO, Philip Dalidakis, says is disappointing for both the environment, industry and local community.

"This decision is one born as a result of VEAC refusing to acknowledge the positive environmental effects of selectively harvesting Redgums to reduce the stress on water starved forests."

"It is a real disappointment for the River Redgum timber industry and a blow for the local communities in the region, especially in such economically uncertain times," Mr Dalidakis said.

"The River Redgum timber industry has well over 100 years of proud history in the region having continuously engaged the local community in a positive way through employment, training and support of local residents."

The VAFI acknowledges the Victorian Government's financial assistance package for the businesses and workers affected and aim to work with them in a constructive manner to achieve the best outcome for all concerned.

"This is a decision that will have a strong impact on local businesses and their workers and we therefore look to the example set in the Box Ironbark Structural Adjustment Program as a starting point for negotiations," Mr Dalidakis said.

"We acknowledge the Government has now made its decision, and cautiously welcome the \$4.5 million assistance package but are concerned that may be on the low side."

"Obviously, the devil will be in the detail, but we aim to work with the Government, fighting for a fair and just compensation package for all those affected," Mr Dalidakis said.

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