



# VAFI

## VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF FOREST INDUSTRIES

29 October, 2008

### EAST GIPPSLAND PROTEST CAUSE LOST IN THE WILDERNESS

Recent protests disrupting timber harvesting in an East Gippsland State Forest area are misdirected and irresponsible says the Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI), the peak industry body for the Victorian timber industry.

The VAFI acting CEO, Lisa Marty, said that while the protest was directed at the State Government regarding a previous election policy for new National Parks, the actual protest location is irrelevant to the issue and is only disrupting legitimate employment in the region.

“Whilst the Victorian Association of Forest Industries recognises the democratic right to protest, these protesters are completely misinformed and misdirected in their approach to Government”, Ms Marty said.

“The protest is occurring in an area of forest that has been legitimately and responsibly planned for harvest and regeneration by the State Government. The area in question is not part of any National Park considerations; this was confirmed by a Government spokesperson today”.

“The protest is only achieving unnecessary disruption to the Victorian timber industry and its employees who are lawfully undertaking planned harvesting in the area.”

VAFI Member and AusWest Timbers Operations Manager, Jack Light, says the protest has added to the disruption of production at the Auswest sawmill in Orbost, with operations forced to close down next week due to a lack of log supply.

“We’ll have to lay off 40 workers all next week, less than two months before Christmas, and these protesters are only exacerbating the problem by further reducing supply and harassing industry employees who are only trying to carry out their jobs”, Mr Light said.

“If they want to engage with the Government that’s fine, but do it in a correct and civilised manner and not to the detriment of a lawful industry that is crucial to a town like Orbost”.

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