

Friday, 03 September 2010

VAFI supports TCA message

Victoria's peak representative body for the timber industry, the Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI), has supported the central message of the Timber Communities Australia (TCA) commissioned report, which outlines the impact of State Government decisions on forest industries.

VAFI Deputy CEO, Ms Lisa Marty, said successive governments have made a number of decisions to reduce native timber production without considering the possible consequences on forest industries and the jobs they create.

"This report outlines the damage government decisions have had on the industry in the past," Ms Marty said.

"These decisions have directly affected thousands of people due to mill closures and thousands more have been hit by the subsequent job losses as other businesses in regional areas have been forced to close."

Forest industries directly employ nearly 25,000 people and indirectly support approximately 50,000 more jobs.

Ms Marty said that while the industry was a major employer in regional areas, it also provided a wide range of job opportunities for people in Melbourne's suburbs.

"The forest industry is a 21st century business that not only involves harvesting timber, but includes a wide range of value-adding activities," she said.

"It uses innovative manufacturing processes to make products we take for granted, such as high-strength support beams for people's homes, paper, flooring and staircases, and fine-quality furniture.

"This kind of work employs nearly 15,000 people and makes up 63 percent of the industry's directly employed workforce.

"By continuing to reduce the amount of timber the industry can harvest without reducing the public's appetite for forest products, the government is effectively outsourcing employment opportunities from Victoria to other countries, where the sustainability of forest industries can be less clearly ascertained."