

MediaRelease



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OUR FOREST OUR FUTURE ANNIVERSARY IS THE TIME TO DRAW THE LINE IN THE SAND

Today is the 4th anniversary of the Brack's Governments launch of the Our Forest Our Future policy that sent shivers through the Victorian Timber Industry and dependent communities in 2002, said Timber Communities Australia.

"The Bracks Government four years ago announced their Our Forest Our Future (OFOF) Policy which resulted in sawmills closing and harvesting and haulage contractors and their families being made redundant", said Mrs Kersten Gentle, Victorian State Manager of the national grassroots community organisation Timber Communities Australia.

"The policy promised that *OFOF* would ensure our forests, the timber industry and their communities are protected for the long term, yet 4 years later protesters are still disrupting timber workers lives and lobbying for more areas to be protected", Mrs Gentle said.

"The Bracks Government made a promise to the timber industry that once the cuts were made to ensure timber harvesting in native forests was sustainable that they were committed to the long term viability of the timber industry as part of its commitment to regional Victoria".

"With an election looming and illegal protests continuing the time has come for the Bracks Government to reassure the Victorian native timber industry that they stand by their promise and that they will ensure the sustainable yield of 575,000m³ is available for the timber industry to grow and prosper with confidence", said Mrs Gentle.

"Timber workers are hard working people and they have the legal right to work in a safe workplace and that means the Government must be tougher on anti-logging protesters who continually break the law and cost taxpayers thousands of dollars".

"The OFOF Policy Statement recognised that *more than two-thirds of Victoria's public forests are now protected in our National parks and reserve system* and that the policy made a fundamental commitment to the sustainable allocation of forest resources".

"Words and policy seem to be easy for the Bracks Government, now they must ACT and bring their promises of a viable sustainable timber industry for the future of regional communities to fruition", Mrs Gentle said.

"We want Mr Bracks to stand tall and recommit his support to Victoria's timber industry and dependent communities and tell the environment groups that enough is enough and that no more forest will be locked up. If Mr Bracks and his government are fairdinkum about supporting a viable timber industry then now is the time to draw the line in the sand", concluded Mrs Gentle.

For more information call:

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