

MEDIA RELEASE



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VEAC TEARS THE HEART OUT OF REDGUM

After 10 years of drought and hard times communities in the Redgum region have had their hearts ripped out by the VEAC (Victorian Environmental Assessment Council) draft proposals released yesterday said Timber Communities Australia.

“There are at least 80 direct jobs in the timber industry on the chopping block. Add a multiplier of a least 5 and you end up with 400 families that will be adversely affected by these outcomes” said Scott Gentle, the Victorian State Manager for the grassroots organisation, Timber Communities Australia (TCA)

“To put it into context these job losses are equivalent to the Redgum Communities as the Ford job losses are to the City of Geelong.” Said Mr Gentle.

“Just like Ford is a four letter word for the people of Geelong, VEAC is definitely a four letter word to the people living in Redgum communities dependent on access to their forests.”

These recommendations fail to weigh up the balance between environment and communities with the VEAC Chairperson Duncan Malcolm openly stating that the need for biodiversity was more important than the communities of the redgum forests.

“It seems that VEAC has taken the extreme green view of the lock it up and leave it mentality, no matter what the cost.” Said Mr. Gentle.

“This report flies in the face of all forest decisions over the past 20 years, including the UN forum on forests that recognizes that the needs of forest communities should be equal to that of biodiversity.”

“VEACs credibility needs to be questioned given the public release of the report was at 2.00pm on Thursday 19th yet environment groups had press releases ready to go referring to content in the report at the same time”, Mr. Gentle said.

One can only assume the environment groups are either filled with speed readers or VEAC’s true green colours have shone through and the report was leaked early to their friends.

“TCA and its members in the Box & Ironbark Region and the Otways only shudder as we once again are faced with a process that is not only flawed but has a pre-determined outcome that will impact on rural families and communities”, concluded Mr. Gentle.

For further information call:

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