

MEDIA RELEASE



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LABOTO'S REFUSAL RESULTS IN COMMUNITY PICKET LINE

The decision by State Member for Gembrook Tammy Lobato to refuse a meeting with timber workers families resulted in a community picket line being set up in Powelltown said Timber Communities Australia today.

"Ms Lobato slammed the protest action by women involved in the industry last week, yet this week refused to meet with them to discuss their on-going concerns giving a clear loud message to her constituents that she does not care about our views or our industry", said Mrs Kersten Gentle, National Coordinator of TCA.

"Last week Ms Lobato abused us for not taking the correct steps, but yet when contacted Friday for a meeting in Powelltown with 4 contractors wives she simply refused to meet us. Ms Lobato is our local member and it is her responsibility to consult with all her constituents not just the ones she agrees with", said Mrs McConachy whose business is threatened by Ms Lobato's misguided views.

"The community picket line outside the general store was supported by approximately 20 women and children. We did not hinder the business and in fact we had full support of the management of the general store who recognised that their business is dependent on timber workers and their families" said Mrs McConachy

"Ms Lobato was a no show. She rang the store cancelling meetings claiming she was in fear of her life, however when she drove past at 9.20am she was waving and smiling at us and definitely didn't look like she was in fear", Mrs McConachy said.

Only 1 person arrived for an appointment with Ms Lobato during the morning and was amazed that Ms Lobato did not meet her.

"When I arrived for my meeting, I was greeted by a group of mothers and children silently protesting and holding placards to support their industry at a community picket line. At 10am the store proprietor received a call informing me the meeting was cancelled as Ms Lobato felt she was in physical danger", said Shelley Gray of the Powelltown Football Club.

"I can't believe a member of Parliament could be threatened by a group of women and children in a public place, supporting their families. The group was peaceful and just wanted to be granted an audience with their local member", said Mrs Gray.

"I would like to congratulate the protesters who conducted themselves professionally and peacefully. To be labelled a threat to anyone's safety is a joke and should be taken as such. Our football club like many local businesses could not survive without the timber industry and for this reason I wouldn't have crossed the picket line even if Ms Lobato did show", Mrs Gray said.

"Ms Lobato cannot continue to ignore us and we will continue to push for a meeting and a forest tour so she can fully understand the implications of her misguided comments", concluded Mrs Gentle.

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