



## ***Joint media release***

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### **ALP forest policy platform: Lost opportunity**

The Labor party platform on forests endorsed at the National Conference represents a missed opportunity to modernise the ALP's approach to forest policy. The lack of policy clarity in the platform does little to gain the confidence of industry and timber communities.

Representatives of the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI), the Forest Industries Association of Tasmania (FIAT) and Timber Communities Australia (TCA), said today the platform also represents a missed opportunity to look at the broader environmental benefits of forest management including a recognition of the very positive role that production forestry will play in climate change policy through sequestering carbon from the atmosphere.

“The ALP platform reads like a policy from the past, as it does not recognise that the balance between the environment, communities and the economy has already been reached under the Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) and the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (TCFA),” said Allan Hansard, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of NAFI.

“If Labor wishes to win the confidence of timber workers and their families they will need to recognise that balance and commit to protecting it. Because of the balance reached under the RFAs there is no need for any further production forests to be added to the reserve system. Any move to do so will result in job losses,” said Mr Hansard.

FIAT Chief Executive Officer, Terry Edwards, said “due to the platform's lack of clarity, Peter Garrett has an open license from the Labor party to use forestry as a bargaining chip for support from the Greens in the lead up to the election and beyond. This will lead to further lock up of sustainably managed production forests.”

“The Union is happy to give Labor its blessings because they have been given assurances that the industry won't suffer. The Labor party ought to share the details of those assurances with the broader timber community and the industry. If they don't, it is difficult to see how confidence in Labor could be restored,” said Mr Edwards.

TCA Chief Executive, Jill Lewis, said “the industry and timber communities would like the opportunity to work with Labor Shadow Ministers to obtain a firm public commitment on Labor's forest policy, prior to the election, that will deliver certainty for the industry and the communities who rely upon it”.

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