

Media Release



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TCA calls for balance on South Coast forest issues

Jim Adams, said today that those people demanding that no timber harvesting at all should occur in the Wyndham area of South East NSW needed to remember that the forest industry is a major employer of people in that same community.

“I know of at least 16 members of the Wyndham community who work in the natural forest industry sector”, said Mr Adams. He said that many of these were long term Wyndham residents who had contributed strongly to their community over many years.”

It is important to remember that through the Regional Forest Agreements (RFA's) certain areas not considered to be required exclusively for the protection of environmental values were set aside for productive management by Forests NSW under management practices that meet the requirements of the Australian Forestry Standard and all NSW Government environmental protection requirements.

Mr. Adams explained that most public forest in the Wyndham area was classified as National Park with over 85% of forest areas around the Wyndham Valley unavailable for productive management and about 88% in the South East RFA region generally.

Mr Adams said that while he understood that some people were dedicated to a 100% forest closure that outcome was not consistent with the balanced social, economic and environmental objectives of the RFA's. He added that the RFA outcomes, imposed mainly by the NSW Government, had been particularly tough on industry.

“As part of the RFA negotiations” said Mr Adams, “the timber industry had asked the Governments to create special timber reserve forest areas to act as replacement timber supply zones in case it was later decided to add areas designated for wood production to the Reserve system.”

Green groups refused to support this proposal, according to Mr Adams, because they argued then as they are now that forest ecotourism in the new South East Forests National Parks would more than make up for any lost employment in the forest sector.

Jim Adams has challenged those proposing to cease natural forest harvesting in dedicated production forests to show where these forest ecotourism jobs are, what the ongoing investments are or any that are planned, twelve years after they were so firmly mooted.

“The local forest industry has continued to perform, invest and employ. Government commitments to help create access to additional high quality sawlog resource have so far led nowhere and access to the production forest areas provided under the Eden

RFA are required if the industry and communities and individuals who work in it are to remain viable”, claimed Mr Adams.

He said that it is very clear that State Forest east of Wyndham is dedicated to be available for timber production as otherwise it would be a declared National Park like the rest of the local forests. He added that those expressing fears about local water supply needed to acknowledge the very small proportion of the local catchment planned for harvesting, and recognise the water quality and quantity management prescriptions employed by Forests NSW in the conduct of harvesting operations.

He added that the people and those companies in the region that support local investment and employment also need to be heard and have their views considered in the public discussion around this issue.

“TCA recognises that the NSW Government in recent times has largely delivered on its RFA commitments and it is encouraged to continue to do so”. Mr Adams concluded.

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