

Media Release
18 March 2010

MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATES COMMIT TO FORESTRY SECURITY

All candidates for the two major political parties in Saturday's State Election have pledged their support for Tasmania's forest industry and dependent regional communities.

The Forest Industries Association of Tasmania (FIAT) and Timber Communities Australia, Tasmania (TCA) asked all Labor and Liberal Party candidates to sign a statement of commitment to support the balance achieved by the Regional Forest Agreement ensuring the continued sustainable management of the State's forests and the maintenance and creation of regional employment.

FIAT Chief Executive Terry Edwards and TCA State Manager Barry Chipman said importantly **all** (53) Liberal and Labor candidates in all five electorates had individually signed the statement of commitment.

FIAT and the TCA have advised their members and supporters of the commitment and asked them to maximising the value of their vote in the election by voting in order of preference for all candidates of both the major parties.

"At the last State election, two of the four Green members were elected on preferences of voters who first chose Labor or Liberal, or where the Liberal or Labor votes were exhausted," they said.

"This outcome can be avoided if industry supporters' votes stay within the two major parties. By only voting for all Liberal and Labor candidates, Greens will not be elected by preferences or exclusion of these votes.

"If people vote for all the Labor and Liberal candidates in their order of preference, their vote will not be wasted."

FIAT and TCA said that the position of the two major parties and all of their candidates to provide security and certainty to the forest industry will ensure that the industry can continue to focus on down stream processing and maximising the value of the States timber resource for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

TCA and FIAT believe that the responsible approach of both parties following the election will be to pursue the major objectives of their forestry policies within the clear commitments of their candidates regardless of the outcome of the election.

In brief all the candidates have committed to:

- Supporting the balance achieved by Regional Forest Agreement.
- Providing for continued sustainable forest management to maintain and create regional employment.
- Endorsing the National Forest Policy Statement and New Forest Industry Development Strategy.
- Encouraging value adding and down stream processing.
- Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions by sustainable forest management and promoting opportunities for renewable energy from biomass.

Messrs Edwards and Chipman said the commitments by the Labor and Liberal candidates balanced conservation and forestry in Tasmania.

They said the balance achieved by the RFA provided a reserve system comprising 1,465,000 hectares (47.0%) of all aged forests including 79.2% of old growth forest.

The political commitments would ensure that this balance was maintained.

Ends....

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Commitment Statement follows

**2010 State Election
Candidate commitment
Balancing conservation and forestry in Tasmania**

We, the undersigned..... candidates for the State Electorate of, commit our support to the Tasmania Regional Forest Agreement (RFA), which has delivered a balance in forest management and provides the basis for continued sustainable value adding development of renewable timber and wood based products.

As candidates for the 2010 Tasmanian State Election we commit to provide sound leadership on matters of public importance and therefore to promote the balance achieved by the RFA's Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative reserve system that now comprises, 1,465,000 hectares (47.0%) of all aged forests which includes 79.2% of old growth forest. We also commit to support policy settings that provide for the continued sustainable management of Tasmania's RFA approved working forests so as to maintain and create employment for regional communities throughout Tasmania.

We commit our support to the following principles:

1. Continued recognition of the National Forest Policy Statement as the underpinning framework for the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement, that provides certainty for biodiversity conservation and sustainable industry development. We note the New Forest Industry Development Strategy and commit to working closely with the industry in its implementation.
2. Continued development of policies that encourage value adding investments of our sustainably managed working forests that meet the highest environmental standards and to maintain and create regional employment opportunities.
3. Endorse a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, to generate a sustained mitigation benefit and to promote opportunities for renewable energy from biomass. NB we recognise the State's achievement in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 24% since the Kyoto base year.