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The Editor, Mountain Views Mail, Healesville

Cr Dunn Puts Green Beliefs Before Community

Yarra Ranges Councilor Samantha Dunn went to great lengths to denigrate the timber industry within her municipality in Peter Ker's article about salvage harvesting operations (The money or the trees, The Age, 4 Feb). She predictably weighted her trite comments to the favour of the anti-timber activists that parade under the guise of conservationists.

When discussing the economic benefits of the timber industry to the region her selective quotes portray ignorance saying *"there is no basis for those economic claims at all. (The timber industry) employs very, very few people in our community"* and *"logging is not an economic driver in that town (Healesville)"*.

These comments must leave the management, employees and families of high grade timber mills such as Reid Bros, at Yarra Junction, Powelltown Sawmills and Warburton Sawmills wondering if Cr Dunn has learnt anything of the municipality's economic and social fabric during her time in office. In making those comments she also downplays the contributions of the dozens of harvesting and haulage contractors and employees within the Shire.

Healesville, the town Samantha Dunn claims is not economically driven by the timber industry, is also the home of VicForests regional office, the Victorian Forest Harvesting Council, Timber Communities Australia. Many of the Shires forestry contractors are also based at Healesville.

The timber industry means more than just employees to many Yarra Ranges towns; support industries, their employees and families all contribute to this vibrant industry; schools, sporting and community clubs rely on the industry to contribute to their existence.

One could safely assume from her comments that Cr Dunn knows very little about the timber industry that exists in the municipality she purports to represent. However, on Saturday 27 February, Cr Dunn became an instant expert on all things timber when she was headline act for Friends of the Earth's protest at Australian Paper's Maryvale mill.

A bussed-in crowd of about 100 from Melbourne greeted Cr Dunn's media stunt. No doubt she used the opportunity to display her green credentials as a candidate in the November State Election.

That display, along with her continued ignorant comments about the local timber industry, should have ratepayers and residents in wonderment as to her value as a Councilor. Cr Dunn is in denial of the fact that the timber industry is a major contributor to the economic and social values of Yarra Ranges and Victoria.

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