

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government should back ForestrySA, not break it

The government is still playing games with the people of the South East on the forward sale of timber says Shadow Forestry spokesman Adrian Pederick.

Mr Pederick said Treasurer Snelling stated on March 4th 'No decision has been made to sell forest rotations'.

'When questioned in the Parliament on February 8, 2011, the Treasurer refused to back the former Treasurer's guarantee there would be no adverse impact on jobs and the timber industry arising from such a sale,' Mr Pederick said.

'Has the government's position on this sale changed? Is the welfare of hundreds of direct jobs and thousands of indirect jobs no longer the priority? Is the Regional Impact Statement just window-dressing?

'It must be blatantly obvious to all – even without a Regional Impact Statement - that there will be an adverse impact on the region's economy.

'In that same statement on March 4, Treasurer Snelling also said the government would 'retain ownership of ForestrySA even if a forward sale of forest rotations occurs ...'.

Mr Pederick said there has also been no guarantee that ForestrySA would retain full management of the operation in its existing capacity in the event of a sale.

'Currently there are about 200 people employed by Forestry SA, performing a wide range of jobs.

'There is no guarantee how many of them would be retained. A government-owned ForestrySA could be wound back to a handful of people in a city office answering phones and filling in timesheets, with little or no active role in the operation of the forests.

'Treasurer Snelling and his Cabinet colleagues including Premier Rann should accept the glaring reality of the situation, drop the whole forward-sale idea and start working towards investing in developing the industry that will continue to serve the state well.'